SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION REGIONAL PLAN 2018

2018 FULL UPDATE WORKBOOK
DRAFT 08/17/2017

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(1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To be finalized and expanded at the end of the plan process:

Purpose:

The purpose of the Regional Plan is to lay out a road map for the region's future, developed through a very public process of involving regional leaders and stakeholders in making key decisions about the future of the region. This Regional Agenda is the most important part of the plan, it includes the region's vision for the future, key issues and opportunities, and its implementation program for achieving this vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities. The SGRC 2018 Regional Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs effective July 1, 2017.

a) Stakeholder Involvement Summary:

The Stakeholder Involvement outlines the various strategies and techniques used by the Regional Commission to obtain public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Agenda portion of the Regional Plan.

Complete at the end of plan

b) General Vision and Regional Goal Summary:

The Regional Vision which paints a picture of what the region desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged and includes a general vision statement, regional development map and defining narratives for each of the Areas Requiring Special Attention.

Complete at the end of plan

VISION

The Communities Of The Southern Georgia Regional Commission Will Encourage And Support Quality Education And Economic Development That Fosters The Growth Of Local Employment And Business Opportunities, Without Detracting From The Region's Rural Lifestyle And Small Town Character.

- Preserving the Region's Resources
- Enhancing the Region's Standing in the State
- Supporting local communities and industries
- Growing and strengthening from within
- Globalization and Socialization

c) Priority Needs & Opportunities:

The Regional Issues and Opportunities resulted from stakeholder knowledge of the region and interpretation of the Regional Assessment. Each of the issues or opportunities are followed-up with corresponding implementation measures in the Implementation Program.

d) Key Strategies and Specific Actions to Be Pursued:

The Implementation Program is the overall strategy for achieving the Regional Vision and addressing the issues and opportunities. It also identifies specific measures to be undertaken by the region's leaders to implement the plan and provide guidance to developers, local governments, and other public agencies for helping achieve the Regional Vision.

Fill out and expand after input from stakeholders at the end of the plan process.

(2) REGIONAL GOALS AND VISION

The Communities Of The Southern Georgia Regional Commission Will Encourage And Support Quality Education And Economic Development That Fosters The Growth Of Local Employment And Business Opportunities, Without Detracting From The Region's Rural Lifestyle And Small Town Character.

- Preserving the Region's Resources
- Enhancing the Region's Standing in the State
- Supporting local communities and industries
- Growing and strengthening from within
- Globalization and Socialization

(a) List of Regional Goals

Develop specific goals with stakeholders for the Region

- Economic Development Goal

- Natural and Cultural Resources Goal

- Community Facilities and Services Goal

- Housing Goal

- Land Use and Transportation Goal

- Intergovernmental Coordination Goal

- Education Goal

- Senior Services and Aging

(b) Regional Policies

The following guiding principles are policies necessary to provide ongoing guidance and direction to regional leaders for making decisions consistent with achieving the Regional Vision, Regional Goals, or addressing Regional Issues and Opportunities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMEMT

- Consider to develop and implement a variety of strategies to make the region attractive to retirees.
- Support local economic and workforce development entities.
- Promote and encourage regional marketing strategies in efforts to recruit business and industry.
- Pursue appropriate federal and state economic development funding assistance opportunities.
- Support efforts to enhance workforce skills and development throughout the region.
- Consider and plan for infrastructure, transportation, and natural resource protection during economic development decision-making.
- Promote the importance of agriculture to the local economy.
- Encourage and assist local entrepreneurs and small businesses through such programs as businesses incubators and tax incentives such as Enterprise and Opportunity Zones.
- Consider to develop a regional export data study to identify new exporting opportunities within the region.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Strongly encourage to preserve historic and cultural sites.
- Encourage members to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Promote appropriate access to natural, cultural, and historic resources for recreation, education, and tourism purposes as applicable.
- Encourage members to follow Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP's) to protect streams and lakes.
- Strongly support that members continually protect and enhance the region's water quality and quantity.
- Promote and encourage new developments that incorporate parks and open space as quality of life amenities.
- Advocate development practices that do not negatively impact natural, cultural or historic resources.
- Support policies to ensure soil erosion, sedimentation and pollution control measures and practices conform to the minimum requirements outlined by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Services.
- Promote enhanced solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.
- Promote low impact development that preserves the natural topography and existing vegetation of development sites.

COMMUNITY FACILITES AND SERVICES

- Support after- school youth programs
- Encourage to maintain, upgrade, or expand existing facilities to support ad encourage growth in desired areas.
- Identify and secure funding for infrastructure improvement projects

- Encourage growth and development to occur in and around areas that have existing infrastructure.
- Encourage the placement of new schools near new and existing neighborhoods.
- Advocate to utilize new infrastructure investments to shape development patterns.
- Encourage the development of local, but coordinated recreation plans.
- Support the implementation of a newcomer education program with specific focus on senior citizens and the disabled to inform them of the full range of services, treatments, and resources available.
- Promote the use of innovative technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS)and data processing in the provision of local, regional and state provided services.

HOUSING

- Seek to eliminate substandard and/or dilapidated housing in all communities throughout the region.
- Promote and encourage affordable housing opportunities.
- Update zoning ordinances to allow mixed uses where appropriate.
- Advocate to develop in areas already served by municipal or regional infrastructure.
- Promote and encourage development which provides for a variety of residential options.

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

- Encourage and promote development that is compatible with, and enhances the character of each of the region's communities.
- Encourage the creation of attractive gateways into the region's various communities.
- Promote mixed use development and redevelopment.
- Promote growth in areas that can be efficiently served by infrastructure, such as water, wastewater and transportation.
- Support new land uses that enhance housing options in our community.
- Seek to use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.
- Support to preserve the rural character of the region and provide the opportunity for agricultural and forestry activities to remain a vital part of the community.
- Advocate to redevelop and enhance existing commercial and industrial areas within our region in preference to new development in previous undeveloped areas of the region.
- Support appropriate residential and non-residential in-fill development and redevelopment in ways that complement surrounding areas.
- Promote connectivity of the region's road network.
- Promote alternative transportation choices (e.g. walking, biking, car-pooling etc.).
- Encourage the coordination of transportation network improvements and land use planning.
- Encourage sharing of parking spaces between similar uses.
- Support to provide traffic calming and other measures that lower automobile speeds which improves conditions for walking, bicycling and transit in residential areas.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

- Encourage coordination to consult and/or inform all affected jurisdictions and public entities on decisions likely to impact them.
- Promote and encourage cooperation and collaboration between jurisdictions in developing solutions for shared regional issues.
- Encourage sharing of services and facilities between jurisdictions for mutual benefit.

EDUCATION
Develop policies

SENIOR SERVICES AND AGING
Develop policies

(c) Regional Development Maps

I. Regional Land Use Map
(developed, developing , rural areas)

The Regional Development Map depicts desired future land use patterns for the region that directly correspond to the general categories identified:

Rural: Areas not expected to become urbanized or require provision of urban services during the planning period.

Developed: Areas exhibiting urban type development patterns and where urban services(i.e., water, sewer, etc.) are already being provided at the time of plan preparation

Developing : Areas that will likely become urbanized and require provision of new urban services (i.e., water, sewer, etc.) during the planning period.

An analysis of regional development patterns is a vital component of the regional plan. It helps prepare for development where it is likely to occur and mitigate adverse or enhance positive development impacts. Understanding and anticipating these impacts helps local governments and residents to determine the type and quantity of development to encourage within the area and to efficiently and effectively plan for future public service demands, determine conservation needs of natural and cultural resources and coordinate with other local governments.

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Regional Land Use Map

Legend

MajorRoads
- Interstates
- State Routes
- US Highways
- Counties

Patterns
- Developed
- Developing
- Rural

Southern Georgia Regional Commission

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Miles
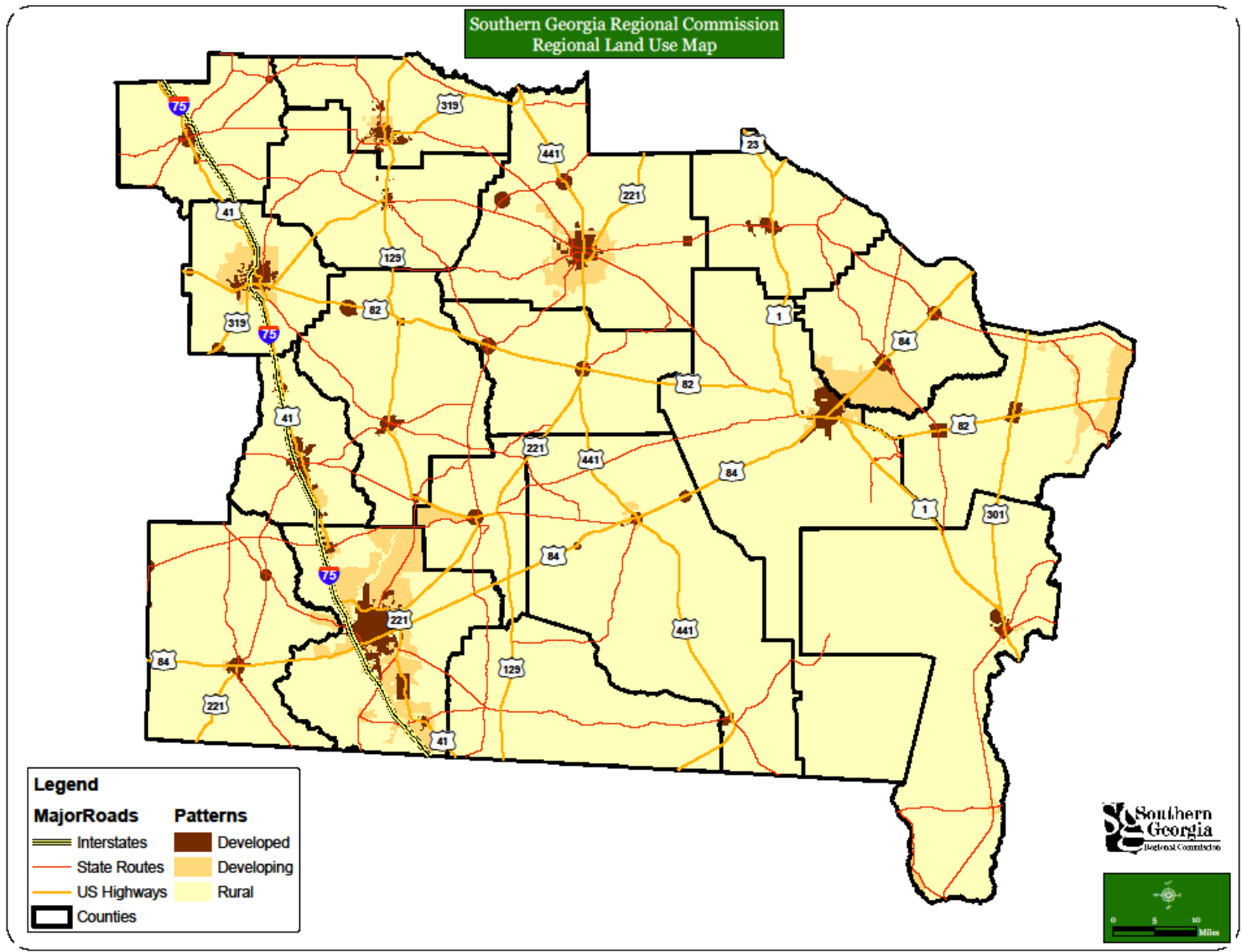
II. Conservation and Development Map

Conservation: Areas preserved in order to protect important resources or environmentally sensitive areas of the region. Areas shown as conservation correspond to the Regionally Important Resource Map for the region.

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Conservation and Development Map
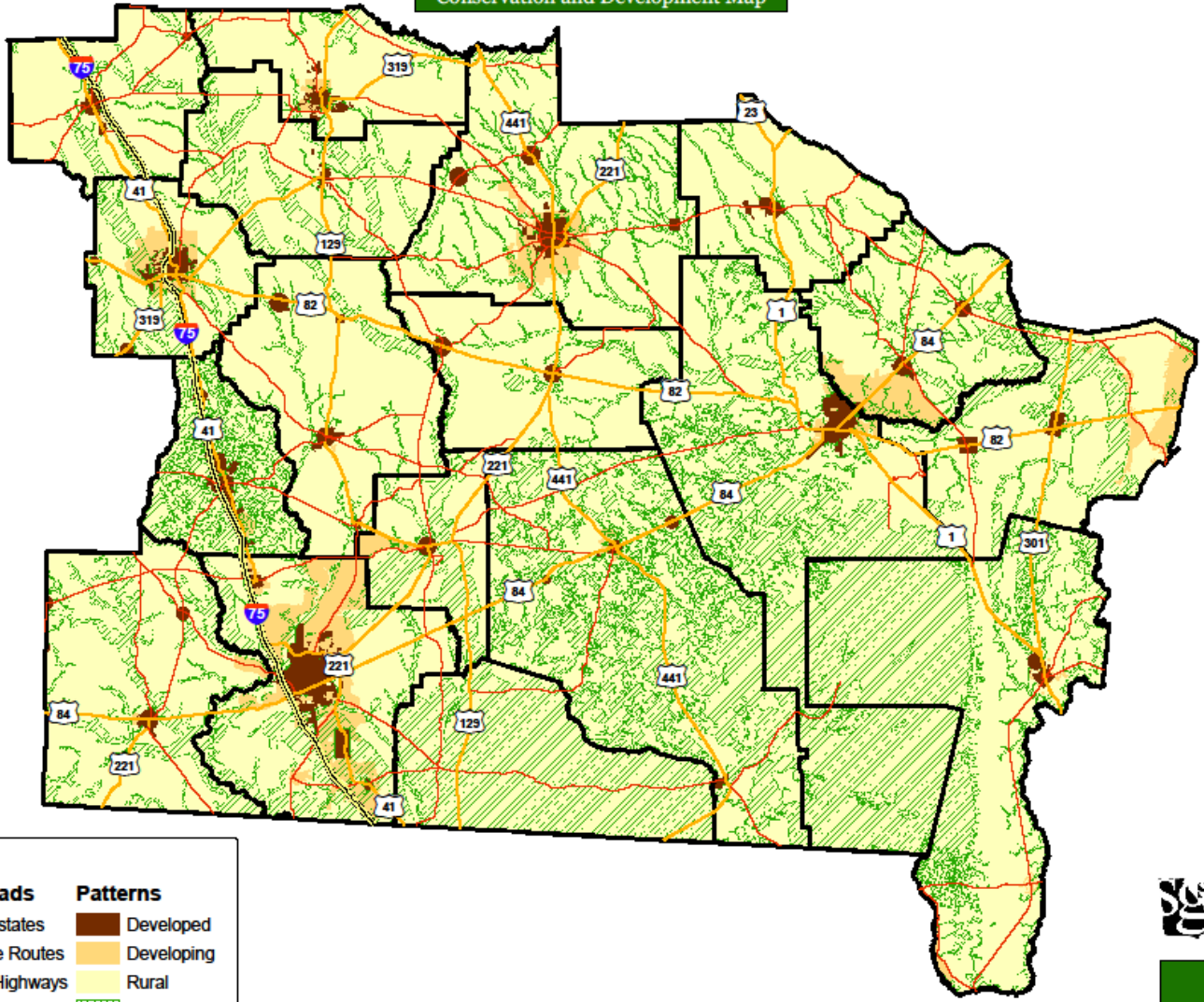
Legend

MajorRoads
- ══ Interstates
- — State Routes
- — US Highways
- ▭ Counties

Patterns
- ■ Developed
- ■ Developing
- ▨ Rural
- ▨ Conservation

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Georgia
Regional Commission

III. Areas Requiring Special Attention Map and Narrative

(1) Areas Requiring Special Attention Map
(Threatened regionally important resources, Rapid development, Redevelopment)

Update map below to reflect stakeholder input

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Areas Requiring Special Attention
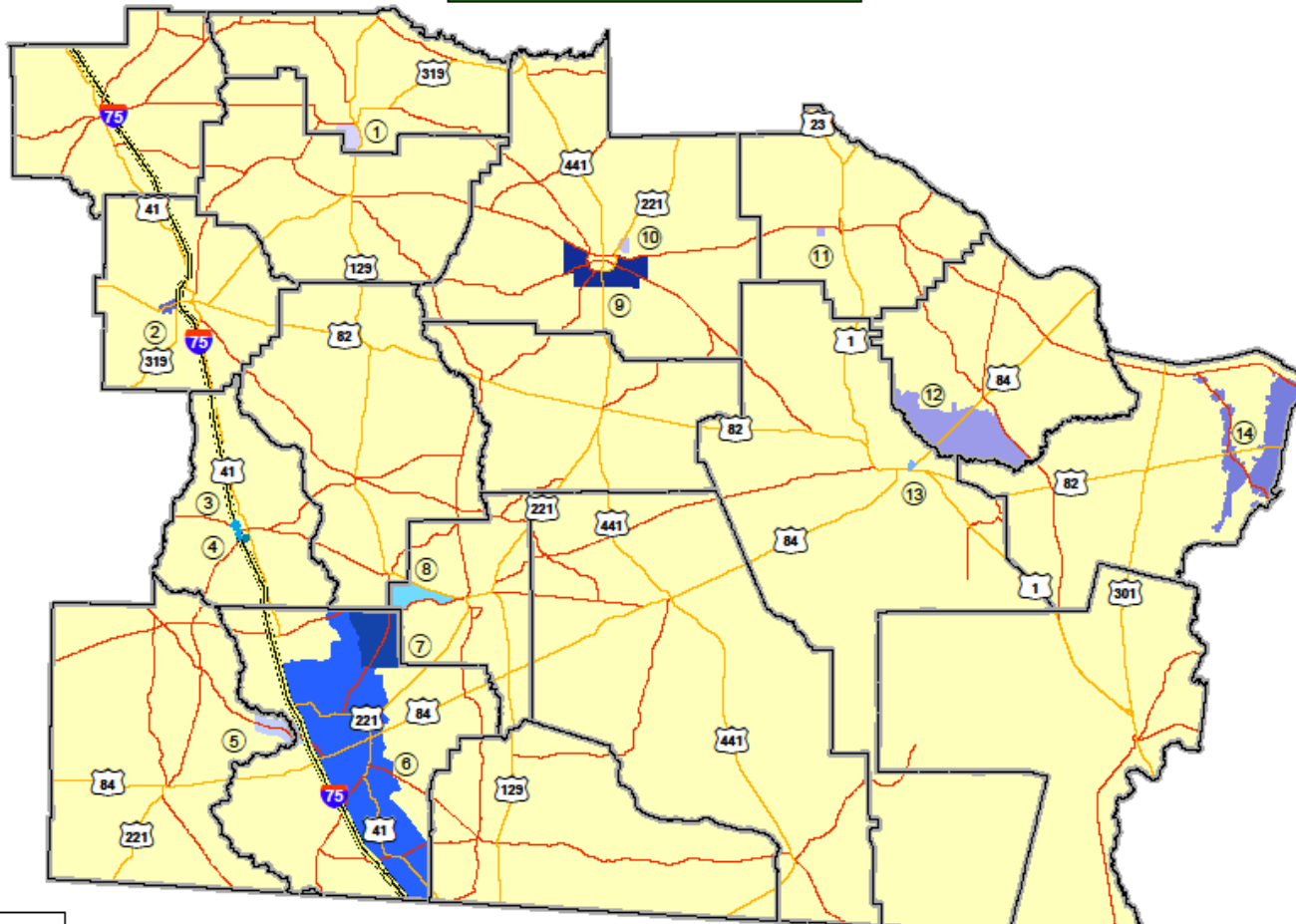
Legend

- Counties
- ARSAs

Major Roads

- Interstates
- State Routes
- US Highways

Number Legend

1. Ben Hill Industrial Airport Area
2. Highway 82 West
3. Cook County Interchanges
4. Cook County Industrial Park
5. Troupeville
6. Lowndes North - South Corridor
7. Moody AFB Area
8. Western Lanier
9. Douglas Perimeter
10. Oak Park
11. Blueberry Plantation
12. Pierce / Ware County Line
13. Downtown Waycross
14. Eastern Brantley
15. Georgia Highway 121

Southern Georgia
Regional Commission

(2) Areas Requiring Special Attention Defining Narrative

THREATENED REGIONALLY IMPORTANT RESOURCES

In October 2011, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission completed and adopted a Regionally Important Resource (RIR) Plan and Map. The Regional Important Resources Plan furthers the work being done on the local, regional, and state levels to preserve environmental resources, historical sites and unique cultural landscapes. The Plan promotes balanced growth and sustainable development practices to enhance the quality of life in communities throughout the region. As part of this update, the previously identified regional important resources were reviewed and updated where needed. Expand intro as needed after completion of review.

Quality Community Objectives applicable to Conservation

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:
Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

EFFICIENT LAND USE:
Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation areas.

SENSE OF PLACE:
Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

REGIONAL COOPERATION:
Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations, identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as the protection of shared natural resources, development of transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

Desired Development Patterns

The RIR Plan provides specific Appropriate Development Practices and General Policies and Protection Measures that deal specifically with each of the resource areas.

Specific Types of Land Uses
- Natural, Cultural, and Historic Parks and Sites
- State Parks and Nature Preserves
- Passive Recreation
- Historic Agriculture Resources
- Wildlife Management Areas
- National Wildlife Refugee

Implementation Measures
- Enhance the focus on protection and management of important natural and cultural resources in the Southern Georgia Region.
- Provide for careful consideration of, and planning for, impacts of new development on these important resources.
- Improve local, regional, and state level coordination in the protection and management of identified resources.

In workshops solicit Areas of Special Attention re: Threatened Regional Important Resources and list in the following with pictures.

Springs in Brooks County

AREAS OF RAPID DEVELOPMENT

Quality Community Objectives applicable to Areas of Rapid Development

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:
Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:
Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

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LOCAL PREPARDNESS:
Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

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TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS:
Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land-use decisions within the community.

<u>Desired Development Patterns</u>
- Driveway consolidation from inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Developments that have easy access to nearby transit, shopping, schools, and other areas where residents travel daily.
- Accommodation of "big box" retail in a way that compliments surrounding uses; such as breaking up the façade to look like a collection of smaller stores.
- Homes, shops, small business, and institutions grouped together in villages or attractive mixed use centers that serve adjacent neighborhoods. Centers are very pedestrian friendly, and include pleasant community gathering spaces. Residences bring round-the-clock activity to the area.
- Improvement of sidewalk and street appearance and amenities of commercial centers.
- Redevelopment of older strip commercial centers in lieu of new construction further down the strip.
- Infill development on vacant sites closer in to the center of the community. These sites, with existing infrastructure in place, are used for new development, matching character of surrounding neighborhood in lieu of more development on greenfield sites.
- Landscaped raised mediums separating traffic lanes.
- Restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.
- New development that reflects traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles, such as; smaller lots, orientation to street, mix of housing types, pedestrian access to neighborhood commercial center.
- Residential development that offers a mix of housing types(single family homes, town homes, live/work units, lofts, over-the-shop, and apartments), density and prices in the same neighborhood.
- New developments that contain a mix of residential, commercial uses and community facilities at small enough scale and proximity to encourage walking between destinations.
- Landscaping of parking areas to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses.
- Shared parking arrangements that reduce overall parking needs.
- Revitalization of existing neighborhood commercial centers to capture more market activity and serve as community focal points.
- Location of higher density attached housing near commercial centers or along arterial roads, and single-family detached housing elsewhere in the neighborhood.
- Consistency with development standards set forth in the Lowndes County Moody Activity Zone (MAZ).
- Relocate utilities off the street frontage or underground.
- Install traffic calming devices, such as, raised pedestrian crossings, on-street parking, or landscaped medians.

<u>Specific Types of Land Uses</u>
- Suburban residential
- Institutional

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Service
- Office
- High-density residential
- Conservation
- Consistency with the Land Use Compatibility Table in the Lowndes County Moody Activity Zone (MAZ).
- Retail Shops
- Restaurants
- Entertainment venues

Implementation Measures

- Promote moderate density, traditional neighborhood development (TND) style residential subdivisions.
- Strong connectivity and continuity between each master planned development.
- Good vehicular and pedestrian/bike connections to retail commercial services as well as internal street connectivity, connectivity to adjacent properties/subdivisions, and multiple site access points.
- Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes.
- Promote street design that fosters traffic calming such as narrower residential streets, on-street parking, and addition of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Enact guidelines for new development, including minimal building setback requirements from the street, to ensure that the corridors become more attractive as properties develop or redevelop.
- Focus on corridor appearance with appropriate signage landscaping and other beautification measures.
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory signage to clustered developments.
- Provide paved shoulders that can be used by bicycles or as emergency breakdown lanes.
- Upgrade the appearance of existing older commercial buildings with façade improvements, new architectural elements, or awnings.
- Promote infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites.
- Continued cooperation between the Valdosta Regional Airport, City of Valdosta, and Lowndes County on a variety of levels to address issues and opportunities that face the Base and surrounding area.
- Continuous review and update of current building codes height restriction ordinances, and zoning ordinances to insure all AICUZ guidelines are met and the operations of MAFB are protected.
- Undertake economic development initiatives that support the continued vitality of MAFB; such as seeking complimentary, supporting industries in locations in close proximity to the Base.
- Identify and prioritize properties that are considered incompatible under Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) guidelines; such as establish method to monitor and purchase "for sale" properties designated a incompatible uses; identify funding mechanisms; and program funds for acquisition of designated property.

AREAS OF RAPID DEVELOPMENT

Douglas Perimeter: The area around the perimeter road around Douglas in Coffee County has seen rapid development over the past several years. As the city and the county seek to continue to develop the area, the negative impacts of rapid development will need to be mitigated. *(Map Key 9)*

Bacon County Blueberry Plantation: This area west of Alma is a multifaceted character area, which includes an adjoining airport, 18 Hole Golf Course, fast growing residential area, and the home of the new Blueberry Plantation. This development will likely continue to develop. *(Map Key 11)*

Ben Hill County Airport/Industrial area and South Corridor:
The new industrial park, the local airport and recent commercial development along Business Route 107 have created a development friendly environment, where future growth is encouraged. This area will likely continue to develop over the planning period.
(Map Key 1)

Troupeville Community: This area in eastern Brooks County is adjacent to Lowndes County, and has a direct connection to one of the major commercial corridors of the City of Valdosta. Subsequently, new commercial activity and residential growth have continued in this portion of Brooks County in spite of the County's overall population decline. This is an area where typical types of suburban residential subdivision development have occurred. (*Map Key 5*)

Western Lanier County/Banks Lake NWR: On a percentage of overall population, Lanier County has seen the greatest population increase between the last two censuses. The great majority of this growth has occurred in Western Lanier County and along the north shore of the Banks Lake NWR. It is expected that this area will continue to flourish with residential development within the next five years, as property values, good schools, and a close proximity to Moody AFB draw more and more people. *(Map Key 8)*

Cook County I-75 Interchange Areas and Outlet Mall: The presence of several interstate interchanges, an industrial presence and a languishing outlet mall have created opportunities for any number of development or redevelopments in the area. New shopping venues, retail services, and mixed use opportunities could resurrect a once popular shopping destination known as the King Frog. Attention should be given in the area to ensure such future development or redevelopment does not overburden or otherwise negatively impact the community. *(Map Key 3)*

Lowndes County North/South Corridors: Growth within Lowndes County and around the City of Valdosta have tended to go either north toward Moody, or south toward the community of Lake Park and the Florida state line. Particularly, the corridors of US 41 North, Bemiss Road, North Valdosta Road, and Inner Perimeter Road continue to experience new growth and development. These corridors need to be encouraged to grow appropriately given the local services available and the surrounding land uses. *(Map Key 6)*

Tift Highway 82 West Corridor: This area in Tift County near the western end of the City of Tifton has seen significant development, specifically, the area from **Highway 82 west of I-75.** Development strategies will need to include provision of infrastructure (water, sewer, roads) concurrent with development and buffers between incompatible uses, sidewalks, landscaping and protection of groundwater recharge areas. *(Map Key 2)*

Pierce/Ware County Line: Currently the area in close proximity to the Pierce/Ware County line is developing quickly. Much of this area was at one time agriculture/forestry land use but with the rapid development of this area, the land use will continue to change over the next 20 years. Continued development is expected throughout the planning period. *(Map Key 12)*

Military Installation – Moody Air Force Base and surrounding Area:

Located in northeastern Lowndes County near the borders with Lanier and Berrien County, the Moody Air Force Base (MAFB) is home to the Air Force's 23rd Wing, and trains and employs over 6,000 military and civilian personnel. The presence of MAFB within the area has led to ongoing growth and development, and resulted in over $440 million in local economic impact. As a result, it is anticipated the area surrounding the base will continue to grow and develop, presenting planning and growth management challenges to each of the local communities. A Joint Land Use Study has been completed which identifies local issues and impacts, recommends new policies, projects and management techniques, and provides model ordinances and agreements to address these issues. *(Map Key 7)*

Examples of Desired Development
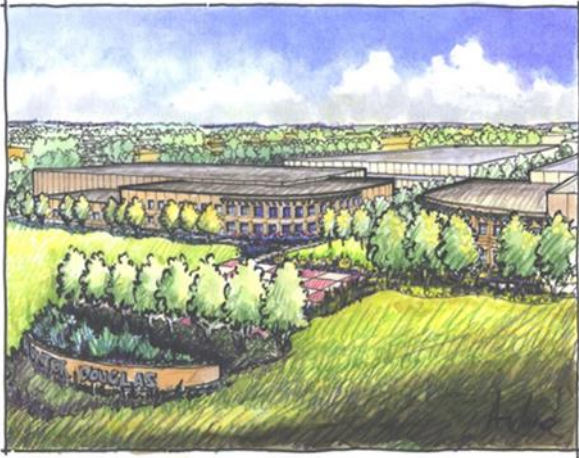
This could be Patterson or Ashley or parts of Bemiss Road. Photo by Jday.

AREAS FOR REDEVELOPMENT

Quality Community Objectives applicable to Areas for Redevelopment

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:
Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:
Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.

EFFICIENT LAND USE:
Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, or conservation areas.

LOCAL PREPARDNESS:
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SENSE OF PLACE:
Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

REGIONAL COOPERATION:
Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations, identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as the protection of shared natural resources, development of transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.

HOUSING OPTIONS:
Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; promoting programs to provide housing for residents of all socio-economic backgrounds; including affordable mortgage finance options; instituting programs to address homelessness issues in the community; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS:
Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land-use decisions within the community.

Desired Development Patterns
- Infill development on vacant sites closer in to the center of the community.
- Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites.
- Brownfield redevelopment that converts formerly industrial/commercial sites to mixed -use developments.
- Restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.
- Revitalization of existing neighborhood commercial centers to capture more market activity and serve as community focal points.
- Shared parking arrangements that reduce overall parking needs.
- Homes, shops, small businesses, and institutions grouped together in villages or attractive mixed use centers that serve adjacent neighborhoods. Centers are very pedestrian friendly, and include pleasant community gathering spaces. Residences brig round-the-clock activity to the area.
- Residential Development that offers a mix of housing types and mix of uses such as grocery stores, drug stores and corner stores.
- New development that maximizes the use of existing public facilities and infrastructure.
- Infill development that blends into the character of the neighborhood.
- Improvement of sidewalks to encourage walkability and improve the appearance of the street.
- New major employers within the neighborhood that make jobs available/accessible to all residents by transit, walking or bicycling.

Specific Types of Land Uses
- Large and Mid -Sized Commercial (office and retail)
- Residential
- Hotels
- Mixed-use
- Town Centers
- Institutional
- Parks and Open Space

Implementation Measures
- Establish traffic-calming mechanisms where appropriate.

- Establish linkages between existing offices/commercial uses ad residential neighborhoods where none exist.
- Strong connectivity and continuity between each master planned development.
- Enact guidelines for new development, including minimal building setback requirements from the street
- Encourage low-density, low-impact, compatible development that uses context-sensitive design practices
- Utilize infill development programs to determine a comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development in particular areas of the community, while also regulating development to ensure protection of quality of life in affected neighborhoods.
- Provide incentives and public improvements to encourage infill development.
- Allow a mix of housing sizes, types and income levels within neighborhoods.

AREAS FOR REDEVELOPMENT
Areas With Significant Infill Opportunities

Cook County Industrial Park: In this area, along the I-75 corridor, the old Del-Cook saw mill provided economic opportunities to over 250 people for 40+ years. Consisting of 155 acres, the old Del-Cook sawmill site is now a potential Brownfield site that has undergone environmental remediation. The property is located in the Adel Industrial park, and is a prime heavy industrial use area. *(Map Key 4)*

Downtown Waycross: Within the downtown area of the City of Waycross many older, often historic, buildings are slowly deteriorating, and are in need of redevelopment and/or rehabilitation. The City is focusing on continuing the renovation and rehabilitation of these historic buildings, and is looking into creative new uses and mixed uses that will include residential, commercial and office uses in the area to encourage a vibrant, livable and walkable downtown. *(Map Key 13)*

AREAS FOR REDEVELOPMENT
Areas Of Significant Disinvestment

Oak Park Deterioration.
The Oak Park area of unincorporated Coffee County houses a large stock of mobile homes. The area is noted for its high concentration of poverty and substandard housing. The County recently completed phase two of the development of a public water system for Oak Park, as part of a series of recommendations established in the 2004 Oak Park Redevelopment Plan. Despite these major improvements, the area lacks sewer service and a paved road system. Health and environmental concerns are rampant in the area. *(Map Key 10)*

Examples of desired residential and commercial infill:

Housing infill in the City of Fitzgerald, GA

Office infill in the City of Valdosta, GA

Example of desired recreational/communityinvestment:

Conceptual drawing of a small park designed for a neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio, to reclaim the neighborhood.

(3) REGIONAL NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Key issues and opportunities facing the Region and the need to address them were identified in the SGRC 2017 Regional Assessment which can be found in the Appendix in conjunction with public and stakeholder participation from and coordination with multiple and diverse interest groups. In order to ensure the broadest buy-in and diversity of input into the comprehensive plan update, all participants were included in the stakeholder group. Outreach to the public, local governments, chambers of commerce, economic development authorities, and other stakeholders and interested parties was accomplished by e-mail correspondence, direct communication, Facebook postings, the project website, and updates provided at workshops and other group meetings. SGRC held a series of three workshops to discuss several elements of the plan. The first workshop was used to review the existing goals, issues, and opportunities; in the form of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, participants updated the list of goals, issues, opportunities, and policies to meet current needs. Copies of the sign-in sheets are provided in the appendix along with public hearing notices.

Through stakeholder planning meetings held August through October the initial list of issues and opportunities identified in the Regional Assessment were refined, modified and added to or subtracted from based on the stakeholders knowledge of the region and resulted in the following final list of Regional Issues and Opportunities. Priority needs and opportunities were also identified as Regional Commission priority for the next five year planning period. They priority issues and opportunities are marked as such.

The identified issues and opportunities are divided into the following segments:

- Economic Development
- Natural & Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities & Services
- Housing
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Education
- Senior Services/Aging

(a) List of Regional Needs and Opportunities

<u>Economic Development (ED)</u>

<u>Issues</u>
- The strengths of the region as a whole are not sufficiently marketed – fighting perception
- Younger population segment is leaving the region
- Lack of rehab and reuse for closed commercial/industrial facilities
- Insufficient tax revenue
- Lack of local coordinated vision and action within the region
- Lack of a Regional Revolving Loan Fund

<u>Opportunities</u>
- Market the region's proximity to the coast
- Market the region's large forestry resources
- Market the region's large water resources
- Market the region's proximity to ports, airports and highways
- Market the sense of place
- Develop a program to assist start-up businesses and local entrepreneurs
- Develop a program to start a regional capital venture program

Natural and Cultural Resources (N/C)

Issues
- Increasing development pressures on groundwater recharge areas, wetlands and river corridors
- Alternative energy technologies such as wind and solar need to be explored
- Insufficient regional marketing of area's natural resources to tourism industry
- Lack of funding to preserve historic and cultural resources
- Lack of regional historic preservation guide

Opportunities
- Encourage stormwater and flood plain management
- Explore the development of a regional purchase of development rights program
- Develop a regional tourism marketing program for natural resources
- Create a narrated Tourism Video
- Educate public on the many positives of placing historical places, buildings, and homes on National Register

Community Facilities & Services (CFS)

Issues
- Lack of funds for implementation of needed projects
- Lack of Level 1 Trauma Center
- Broadband connectivity and coverage still has many gaps in coverage
- Outdated water and sewer infrastructure in many parts of the region
- Aging infrastructure in region (roads and bridges)

Opportunities
- Develop strategies to locate a regional trauma center near a population center such as Douglas
- Tie local services into the appropriate land uses
- Develop public/private partnerships to provide comprehensive regional broadband coverage

Housing (H)

Issues
- Lack of quality housing choices
- Lack of enforcement and demolition programs for blighted areas
- Lack of balance between housing centers and major employment/commercial centers
- Insufficient rental housing
- Insufficient lower income housing

Opportunities
- Public/private sponsored educational workshops, seminars and other programs including a revolving loan program for potential homeowners that will help improve home ownership rates in the community.
- Develop and maintain a current housing inventory to promote housing within the Region
- Develop a demolition program to remove condemned houses
- Update, maintain and enforce zoning regulations to promote quality housing
- Develop programs to assist homeowners in the maintenance and upkeep of homes and properties to avoid/minimize blight

Land Use (LU)

Issues
- Lack of Community and Regional Identity
- Needs (housing, transportation, recreation, health) of the increasing senior
- population are not adequately addressed
- Development pressures on environmentally sensitive lands and farm lands
- Lack of adequate and consistent land use regulations

Opportunities
- Encourage and support Agriculture Industry
- Preserve and enhance the strong Railroad Network and good airports with complementary land uses
- Coordinate regional infill planning efforts
- Provide consistent and adaptive land use regulations within region
- Attraction of the senior population may enhance the region's economic base and provide an experience and knowledge base for the labor market
- Address through land use planning senior and younger population needs for housing, employment, health and recreation services

Transportation (T)

Issues
- Aging transportation infrastructure (especially bridges)
- Lack of funds to repair road infrastructure
- Lack of funds to pave many unpaved roads
- Lack of public transportation

Opportunities
- Develop a right-of-way plan to improve future road construction planning.
- Support and promote local airports
- Start a committee to research and find transportation funding including possible future SPLOST.
- Continue the regional transportation priorities list for projects
- Continue the SPLOST steering committee to represent a unified regional voice
- Possible future TSPLOST

Intergovernmental Coordination (IC)

Issues
- Insufficient coordination and information sharing between local governments
- Inconsistency of land development/zoning regulations within Region
- Insufficient regional tourism efforts

Opportunities
- Provide regional intergovernmental training
- Develop consistent land development/zoning regulations within the region
- Increase regional and multi-jurisdictional cooperation
- Develop a best practices workshop series
- Ensure involvement of medical and educational community

Education (EDU)

Issues
- Insufficient opportunities for technical education and research
- Insufficient coordination with other local governments and agencies

Opportunities
- Market the quality education system in the region
- Support and enhance the recreation opportunities in School System
- Promote the Technical College System
- Develop degree programs in Sustainability and in Wireless/Broadband Engineering
- Encourage and support South Georgia Consortium for Technical Education and Research

Senior Services/Aging

As a result of comments received for the previous update, SGRC has begun to incorporate Senior Services/Aging related projects tied to issues and opportunities identified within the most recent update of the Regional Area Work Plan by the Regional Area Agency on Aging which is housed within the SGRC. The issues and opportunities are as follows:

Issues
- The senior population continues to grow rapidly, which produces a greater demand for services. Additional funding is needed to address program sustainability.
- Seniors need access to resources and supports that may assist them with caring for a grandchild.
- Many seniors need home modifications that will allow them to live longer and more independently in the community.
- Some area hospitals have high readmission rates. Many, if not most, of these readmissions are seniors.

Opportunities
- Additional funding streams can be created through the development of private pay options.
- Coordination with other local agencies can promote greater access to services.
- Partnerships with the private and nonprofit sector may leverage more resources.
- Expansion of evidence based programs may help seniors to live more healthy and independent lives in the community.

(4) IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

(i) Performance Standards

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission has established two levels of achievements standards to provide benchmarks for local governments with which to assess their consistency with the regional plan and their progress towards implementing their local comprehensive plans and addressing their issues and opportunities.

All local governments in the region are expected to achieve the minimum standards (required by Georgia Department of Community Affairs in Planning Requirements) within three years of adoption of the Regional Agenda by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission.
In addition, all local governments are encouraged to pursue the Standards of Excellence. All local governments who attain the Standards of Excellence are also eligible for the Georgia DCA Planning Incentive Program.

In coordination with the annual STWP update or the bi-annual assessment meeting, a review will be performed with each local government to determine the progress towards attaining the Minimum and Excellence Standards.

Minimum Standards

Minimum Standards are essential activities local governments must undertake for consistency with the Regional Plan. The intent is to ensure a consistent and predictable basic level of local requirements across the region.

Minimum Standards encompass specific ordinances, programs or requirements that may be implemented by local governments in order to realize the Regional Vision and/or address the Regional Issues and Opportunities.

All local governments in the region are expected to attain the Minimum Standards within three (3) years of adoption of the Regional Plan, or risk losing Qualified Local Government Status.

Evaluated annually by SGRC via check list: yes/no

Minimum Standards As Adopted

1. All uncertified elected City and County Officials must obtain minimum certification within three years of adoption of Regional Plan by Regional Commission through UGA Carl Vinson Institute or an equivalent Certification Program.
2. All County and City Clerks obtain certification through UGA Carl Vinson Institute or equivalent Certification Program.
3. All Planning Commissioners attend planning commission training within one year of appointment.

4. Update the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) as required by law with all service agreements in place and on file for public review.
5. Update and adopt the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan
6. Upgrade all electronic communication capabilities for effective electronic communication between all local governments and furnish appropriate training in the use.
7. Develop, update, maintain and implement zoning standards or land development regulations.
8. Develop, update, maintain and implement at a minimum the mandatory building codes and fire codes including applicable administrative procedures.
9. Put a program in place to require that all building inspections be done by a Building Inspector, who, at a minimum, has been certified through the Building Official's Association of Georgia.
10. Participate in Joint Comprehensive Planning including development of Short Term Work Programs
11. Annually update the local Short Term Work Programs in coordination with SGRC.
12. Active participation in Best Practices Workshops, joint comprehensive planning meetings including STWP updates, training sessions offered by the SGRC.

Excellence Standards

Not mandatory.

In order to pursue Excellence Performance Standards, all Minimum Performance Standards have to be achieved.

Two or more from any of the categories must be implemented annually if a government chooses to pursue Excellence Performance Standards

Qualifies local governments for DCA Incentive Program.

Economic Development Standards of Excellence As Adopted

1. Become a Camera Ready Community.
2. Participate in the GDED Entrepreneur Friendly Community Initiative
3. Maintain a current inventory of sites and structures suitable for development or redevelopment.
4. Develop a detailed industry recruitment plan including the process for creating a qualified workforce to serve the current and future regional industries.
5. Develop a detailed business/industry retention plan.
6. Participate in multi-jurisdictional ED initiatives.
7. Participate in regional tourism initiatives.
8. Support downtown efforts through promotion and attendance at downtown events.
9. Incorporate economic recovery actions into local Emergency Recovery or Hazard Mitigation Plans.

Natural and Cultural Resources Standards of Excellence

1. Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of natural cultural and historic resources.
2. Develop a local process to include the Regional Important Resource Plan during development approvals.

3. Participate in the Department of Economic Development Tourism Resource Team Program.
4. Develop and adopt ordinances to require protection of open space, natural resources and habitat.
5. Actively seek state and federal designations for local historic districts and/or properties.
6. Adopt and implement a historic preservation ordinance.
7. Implement a Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Program.
8. Adopt and implement a landscaping ordinance.
9. Adopt and implement a Community Awareness Program on stream pollution through drains.
10. Adopt and implement a tree ordinance.

Community Facilities and Services Standards of Excellence

1. Adopt and implement local ordinances and standards that discourage the use of individual septic systems for developments that exceed a density threshold of one dwelling unit per acre in urbanized areas.
2. Provide educational information to property owners on value of connecting to a public or community water/wastewater system when available or nearby.
3. Prohibit the installation of new septic systems within 100 feet of any river and within 50 feet of any state water body.
4. Develop policies and guidelines for a water quality monitoring program.
5. Adopt and implement a stormwater management plan and/or ordinance.
6. Develop and maintain a Capital Improvements Program or similar document.
7. Develop and maintain a community-wide recreation plan.
8. Develop and implement a Waste Management and Recycling Program.

Housing Standards of Excellence

1. Develop and implement incentives to provide housing for various income levels
2. Develop and implement incentives to provide quality affordable housing.
3. Develop and implement incentives to stimulate infill housing in existing neighborhoods.
4. Conduct periodic housing assessments to determine existing conditions as well as current and future housing needs.
5. Participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH).
6. Establish recognition programs such as "Home of the Month" or "Yard of the Month" in partnership with local civic groups.
7. Participate in private/public partnerships such as Habitat for Humanity.

Land Use Standards of Excellence

1. Actively participate in the National Flood Insurance Program by adopting and enforcing a flood management ordinance.
2. Develop and implement design guidelines for important gateways, corridors and city center areas.
3. Develop, adopt and implement community appearance ordinances.
4. Provide incentives for new developments to include open/green space.
5. Provide incentives for developments to pursue "green" site planning or LEEDS certification.
6. Allow for mixed use development in your land use regulations.

7. Develop policies and guidelines to permit urban style development only where sufficient services exist.
8. Plan for development to locate where infrastructure and services already exist.

Transportation Standards of Excellence

1. Adopt a local Right-of-Way Protection Plan
2. Develop an ordinance to encourage street connectivity
3. Develop a local bicycle & pedestrian plan
4. Implement local road improvements consistent with an existing transportation plan.
5. Provide incentives for private roads to be paved and constructed per local road standards and provide for maintenance through homeowner's associations.
6. Prepare a local transit plan.
7. Participate in transportation forums and meetings that focus on multi-modal transportation such as railroad, airport, truck traffic, and ports.
8. Continue to implement and update transportation priority list on a regional and local level.

Intergovernmental Coordination Standards of Excellence

1. Share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions.
2. Participate in SGRC Regional Information Sharing Center
3. Provide input and feedback during the review process of Developments of Regional Impact.

Education Standards of Excellence

1. Appoint a Board of Education member to the Planning Commission and actively participate
2. Participate in quarterly meetings with the Board of Education and local governments.
3. Develop and implement Active Recreation After School Programs.
4. Develop and implement incentives to increase graduation rates.
5. Develop and implement a Youth Leadership Program.
6. Demonstrate active coordination via meetings and communication between Board of Education and local government in school facilities planning and location including the provision of services.
7. Become a Partner in the Safe Routes to School Program.
8. Develop and implement a seamless education model.

Senior Services and Aging Standards of Excellence

Have not been developed or adopted

(ii) Strategies and Regional Work Program

The Regional Work Program identifies specific activities the Southern Georgia Regional Commission will undertake over the next five years in its effort to successfully implement the Regional Plan. Specific strategies to be undertaken by actors other than the Regional Commission, designed to assist in implementation of the Regional Plan are also included.

Various implementation measures are categorized under Planning and Coordination and Review

Planning and Coordination (P&C) measures are those activities undertaken by the Regional Commission to assist both local governments ad regional partners in ensuring conformity with the Regional Plan.

Review (R) activities are those activities initiated or performed by other actors in the region that require review and comment by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission.

Economic Development – Regional Work Program Update FY 2017 – 2021 – Report of Accomplishments

ACTIVITY	P&C Or R*	TIME FRAME Year July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021						ESTIMATED COST (annual)	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	ISS/OPP ADDRESSED	STATUS
		current	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021				
Collaborate on the creation of Digital Economy Incubators – request by regional leaders	P&C				x			Staff Time $35,000	DCA, Local Governments	ED: I-1, I-5, I-6, O1-5, O-6	
Transportation Planning to Support Economic Development: An Exploratory Study of Competitive Industry Clusters and Transportation	P&C		?					Staff Time $150,000	DCA, MPO, local governments	ED: I-1, I-5, I-6, O1-5, O-6	
Develop a Moody Air Force Base Cooperation plan on encroachment – request by regional leaders	P&C		x	x				Staff Time $20,000	DCA, Local Governments, EDA, MPO	ED: I-1, O-1, O-4, O-5 NC: O-3, O-4, I-3, I-5; IC: I-3 E: O-1, O-2, O-3	
GIS Inventory of infrastructure in the region such as water, sewer, natural gas, and broadband – request by regional leaders	P&C	x	x	x	x	x	x	Staff Time $30,000	DCA, EDA	I-3, I-5	
Provide Grants Writing Assistance to local Government for grants that promote economic development	P&C R	x	x	x	x	x	x	Staff Time $5,000 each	DCA, Local Governments, EDA	ED: I-5, I-6 LU: O-1, O-7	
Review/Write Economic Development Elements for local government comprehensive plan updates: Brooks, Bacon and Pierce Counties and their Cities	P&C R	x	x					Staff Time $5,000/element	DCA/ Local Governments	ED: I-5 LU: O-1 E: I-1	
Develop a region-wide attractions map (bicycle route map). Each year complete a different segment of the Region	P&C		x	x	x	x	x	Staff Time $20,000	DCA, MPO	ED: I-1, I-5, I-6, O1-5, O-6	

Natural and Cultural Resources – Regional Work Program Update FY 2017 – 2021 Report of Accomplishments											
ACTIVITY	P&C Or R*	TIME FRAME Year July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021						ESTIMATED COST (annual)	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	ISS/OPP ADDRESSED	STATUS
		Current	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021				
Update the Regional Important Resource Plan incl. marketing plan	P&C			x	x			$65,000 Staff Time	DCA, Local Governments	NC: I-1, I-2, O-1, O-3, O-4	
Assist Local Governments with obtaining information on Federal and State Tax Credits, Incentives & Innovative Financing for historic preservation projects	P&C R	X	x	x	x	x	x	$2,000 each staff time	DCA, Local Governments	NC: I-5, O-5	
Develop a Stormwater Ordinance Template for use by local governments – request by regional leaders	P&C			x	x			$10,000	DCA, MPO, local Governments	NC: I-1, I-2, O-1, O-3, O-4	

ACTIVITY	P&C Or R*	TIME FRAME Year July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021						ESTIMATED COST (annual)	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	STATUS	
		current	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021				
Create a regional stormwater master plan that addresses water quantity and quality and flood plain management – request by regional leaders	P&C			x	x			$45,000	DCA, Local Governments		
Administer grants for Local Communities on request, specifically CDBG grants, and encourage infrastructure projects for water, sewer, natural gas and broadband	P&C R	X	x	x	x	x	x	$5,000 ea Staff Time	DCA, EDA, Local Governments		
Develop a Post-Disaster Response Plan for Business Communities – request by regional leaders	P&C R				x	x		$50,000	DCA, Local Governments, FEMA		
Review/Write Community Work Programs for Local Governments as part of their Comprehensive Plan Updates: Brooks, Bacon and Pierce Counties and their cities	P&C R	X	x					$7,500 each	DCA, local Governments		
Assist Local communities with Hazard Mitigation Plans	P&C R	X	x					staff time	DCA, local governments		

ACTIVITY	P&C Or R*	TIME FRAME Year July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021						ESTIMATED COST (annual)	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	ISS/OPP ADDRESSED	STATUS
		Current	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021				
Develop a model demolition template to remove condemned houses in order to improve local housing stock. – request by regional leaders	P&C			x	x			Staff Time $20,000	DCA, Local Governments	H: I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, O-3	
Develop a model ordinance to assist homeowners in the maintenance and upkeep of homes and properties to avoid/minimize blight. – request by regional leaders	P&C		x	x				Staff time $2,500	DCA, Local Governments	H: I-4, I-5, O-5	
Develop a housing compatibility study for areas around business nodes and corridors – request by regional leaders	P&C				x			$35,000	DCA, Local Governments	I-3, I-4, I-5	
Review Local Government Housing Elements for local Comprehensive Plan Updates and provide technical assistance in the preparation as requested City of Valdosta	P&C R	X						$5,000 each	DCA, Local Governments	I-3, I-4, I-5	

Land Use – Regional Work Program Update FY 2017 – 2021 Report of Accomplishments

ACTIVITY	P&C Or R*	TIME FRAME Year July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2020						ESTIMATED COST (annual)	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	ISS/OPP ADDRESSED	STATUS
		Current	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021				
Develop and Implement a GIS Technical Assistance and Education Program for local governments – request by regional leaders	P&C	X	x					$100,000 (total)	DCA, Local Governments	LU: I-4, O-3, CFS: O-2 ED: I-1	
Review/Write Land Use Elements for local comprehensive plan updates as requested: Brooks, Pierce, and Bacon Counties and their cities	P&C R	X	x					$7,500 each	DCA, Local Governments	LU: O-4, I-5, I-3	
Facilitate visioning workshops throughout the Region to develop regional & local identities – request by regional leaders	P&C R	X	x	x	x	x	x	$5,000 each	DCA, Local Governments	I-1, O-1, O-3, IC: O-1	
Develop a GIS application for Land Use to site different characteristics such as conservation, affordable housing, lots suitable for industrial development, etc. – request by regional leaders	P&C R	X			x			$35,000	DCA, Local Governments	LU: I-4, O-3, CFS: O-2 ED: I-1	
Provide Training workshops on planning and zoning related topics including building inspection/construction – requested by regional leaders	P&C		x		x		x	Staff Time $5,000 each	DCA, Local Governments	LU: O-6	

Transportation – Regional Work Program Update FY 2017 to 2021 Report of Accomplishments

ACTIVITY	P&C Or R*	TIME FRAME Year July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021						ESTIMATED COST (annual)	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	ISS/OPP ADDRESSED	STATUS
		current	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021				
Review/Write Transportation Elements for local comprehensive plan updates incl. ROW plans: Lowndes County and its Cities	P&C R	x						$35,000 each	DCA, Local Governments, GDOT	T: I-4, O-1, O-4, O-6	
Provide technical assistance with airport planning and marketing: Cook, Charlton	P&C		x					Staff Time $15,000	DCA, Local Governments, GDOT, FAA	T: O-2 ED: O-4 LU: O-2	
Develop a study to determine the needs of seniors in the Region regarding transportation in coordination with land use (housing, recreation, access to health facilities etc.) – requested by regional leaders	P&C R		x					Staff Time $25,000	DCA, Local Governments, GDOT, EDA	LU: I-2, O-5, O-6	
Develop a study to determine feasibility and strategies of enhancing railroad and airport facilities through complementary surrounding land uses. – requested by regional leaders	P&C R			x				Staff Time $40,000	DCA, Local Governments, GDOT, EDA	LU: O-2	

Intergovernmental Coordination – Regional Work Program Update FY 2017 to 2021 Report of Accomplishments

ACTIVITY	P&C Or R	TIME FRAME Year July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021						ESTIMATED COST (annual)	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	ISS/OPP ADDRESSED	STATUS
		current	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021				
Develop/Review Comprehensive Plan and Short Term Work Programs for local Governments as required by 110-12-1-.01 or requested by Local Govts.: Brooks, Pierce and Brantley	P&C R	X	x					staff time	DCA	IC: I-1, O-1, O-3	
Foster coordination with the School Boards of the region, specifically with regard to school sitings, closings, conversions, and transportation issues	P&C	X	x	x	x	x	x	Staff Time $10,000	DCA, Local Governments	IC: I-2, O-5 CFS: O-2	
Maintain the Regional Information Sharing Center and enhance function as a regional clearinghouse for networking, information sharing and project collaboration.	P&C	X	x	x	x	x	x	$5,000	DCA, Local Governments	IC: I-1, O-4	
Assist as requested with the Service Delivery Strategies – requested by regional leaders: Brooks, Pierce and Bacon County and their cities	R	X	x	x	x	x	x	Staff Time	DCA, Local Governments	IC: I-1, O-1, O-3	

Education – Regional Work Program Update FY 2017 – 2021 Report of Accomplishments

ACTIVITY	P&C Or R	TIME FRAME Year July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021						ESTIMATED COST	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	ISS/OPP ADDRESSED	STATUS
		current	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021				
Provide one workshop a quarter to local School Boards and other community leaders on Best Management Practices including school sitings, Planning & Zoning, Land Use/Transportation – requested by regional leaders	P&C	x	X	x	x	x	x	$10,000	DCA, Local Governments	IC: O-4 E: I-2; O-2	
Establish a Clearinghouse for exchange and dissemination of information to enhance cooperation and coordination within the Region. – requested by regional leaders.	P&C			x				5,000	DCA, local governments	IC: O-1 E: I-2; O-2	

Senior Services/Aging - Regional Work Program Update FY 2017 – 2021Report of Accomplishments

ACTIVITY	P&C Or R	TIME FRAME Year July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021						ESTIMATED COST	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	ISS/OPP ADDRESSED	
		current	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021				
Develop and implement a sustainability initiative	P&C	X	X	X				staff time	DHS, SGRC	I1 & O1	
Develop a referral and outreach and mechanism with DFCS Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Navigator(s) in the PSA	P&C			X	X	X		Staff time	DHS, SGRC	I2 & O2	
Increase units of home modification (wheelchair ramps) through partnerships with the private sector	P&C			X	X	X	X	Staff time	DHS, SGRC	I3 & O3	
Partner with area hospitals with high readmission rates to provide evidence based care transition programs	P&C		X	X	X			Staff time	DHS, SGRC	I4 & O4	

Regional Work Program 2018 – 2023 template template: to be filled out per stakeholder input during regional plan process

Priority Issue/Opportunity	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
Examples: Increase Housing choices	Provide planning and technical assistance to the Housing Task Force, existing community development organizations, developers and local governments to develop an affordable housing strategy.	Host 8 retreats for Housing Authority Boards	▪ DCA ▪ Local Housing Authorities ▪ Land Banks ▪ Banks	YR 1-2 $2k/retreat		
		Provide facilitation for 6 meetings for Housing Directors and Community Lenders	▪ DCA ▪ Local Housing Authorities ▪ Land Banks Banks	YR 3-4 $500/mtg		
		Draft model ordinances to increase development of affordable housing	▪ DCA ▪ Local Housing Authorities ▪ Land Banks Banks	YR 3 $3,000		
		Regional model ordinance adopted by 10 communities	Local Governments	YR 4-5 Staff Time		
		Regional model ordinance adopted by all communities	Local Governments		Staff Time	
		Work with housing task force to develop cooperation and sharing of ideas				X

APPENDICES

Appendix a) SWOT ANALYSIS

To be filled out after SWOT analysis process and meetings with Stakeholders
Description and graphic

Appendix b) ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QCA

(to be done concurrent with development of elements)
The Quality Community Objectives consider the development patterns and options that will help the Southern Georgia region preserve its unique cultural, natural and historic resources and provide an overall view of the Region's policies. Combined with the insights of Regional Commission staff, this section will assess how well the Southern Georgia region is developing sustainable and livable communities.

- Economic Prosperity
- Resource Management
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Sense of Place
- Regional Cooperation
- Housing Options
- Transportation Options
- Educational Opportunities
- Community Health

a) Economic Prosperity

Policies/Activities/Dev.Patterns	Yes	No

b) Resource Management

Policies/Activities/Dev.Patterns	Yes	No

c) Efficient Land Use

Policies/Activities/Dev.Patterns	Yes	No

d) Local Preparedness

Policies/Activities/Dev.Patterns	Yes	No

e) Sense of Place

Policies/Activities/Dev.Patterns	Yes	No

f) Regional Cooperation

Policies/Activities/Dev.Patterns	Yes	No

g) Housing Options

Policies/Activities/Dev.Patterns	Yes	No

h) Transportation Options

Policies/Activities/Dev.Patterns	Yes	No

h) Educational Opportunities

Policies/Activities/Dev.Patterns	Yes	No

h) Community Health

Policies/Activities/Dev.Patterns	Yes	No

Appendix c) Data and Mapping

Data has been updated with pending expansion of some data and analysis

Regional Data Assessment

The Regional Data Assessment presents a factual and conceptual foundation upon which the rest of the regional plan is built. Staff collected and analyzed data and information throughout the region based on economic development, demographics, transportation, natural and cultural resources, community facilities and services, education and housing. The compiled data results are presented in a concise and easily understood format for consideration by the stakeholders involved in subsequent development of the Regional Issues and Opportunities, Goals, Policies and Activities.

i) Population

- The total population for the Southern Georgia Region increased **from 366,956 in 2001 to 410,520 in 2011**, a **1.2%** population change in those 10 years. The State of Georgia's population increased by 1.7 percent during the same period. The total population for the Southern Georgia Region increased **from 410,520 in 2011 to 411,606 in 2016**, a **1.2%** population change in those 5 years. The State of Georgia's population increased by 1.0 percent during the same period.

- Growth centers within the region account for much of the population increases. Lanier County had the largest increase in population (7,241 in 2000 to 10,078 in 2010) of 39.2% percent, due primarily to its proximity to Moody Air Force Base (MAFB), lower property values and taxes and a good school system. The military base and the nearby growth in the north-east portions of Valdosta also contributed to population increases in Lowndes and Berrien County.

- The growth along the coastal counties to the east and influx from Florida, particularly the Jacksonville metropolitan area, drove the population increases in the eastern portions of the region. For example, the second largest population increase of 25.9% occurred in Brantley County from 14,629 in 2000 to 18,411 in 2010. Large population increases also occurred in Pierce and Charlton County due to these nearby growth centers.

- Eleven of the eighteen counties in the region experienced a loss in population between 2011 and 2017. Turner County experienced the highest loss followed by Irwin County and Charlton County.   The loss in population is due in part to the lack of job growth. Lack of job opportunities fails to attract new residents to these counties. Lack of jobs especially for those between 18 and 24 years have forced this population group to move outside those counties to work and live. Slight population growth was recorded in Atkinson, Bacon, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, and Pierce Counties.

- All the counties have the same population rank within the region that they did in 2015. The most annual population growth has been in Clinch, Pierce, Cook, Bacon, and Atkinson Counties. The most population loss has been in Turner and Irwin Counties, however all these population changes have been quite small—both the increases and the decreases—they range between 0.67% growth and -1.39% population decrease. So all in all, population in the region is quite close to holding steady.

**Total Population
2015 Census**

**Population Average Growth Percentage
2011-2017**
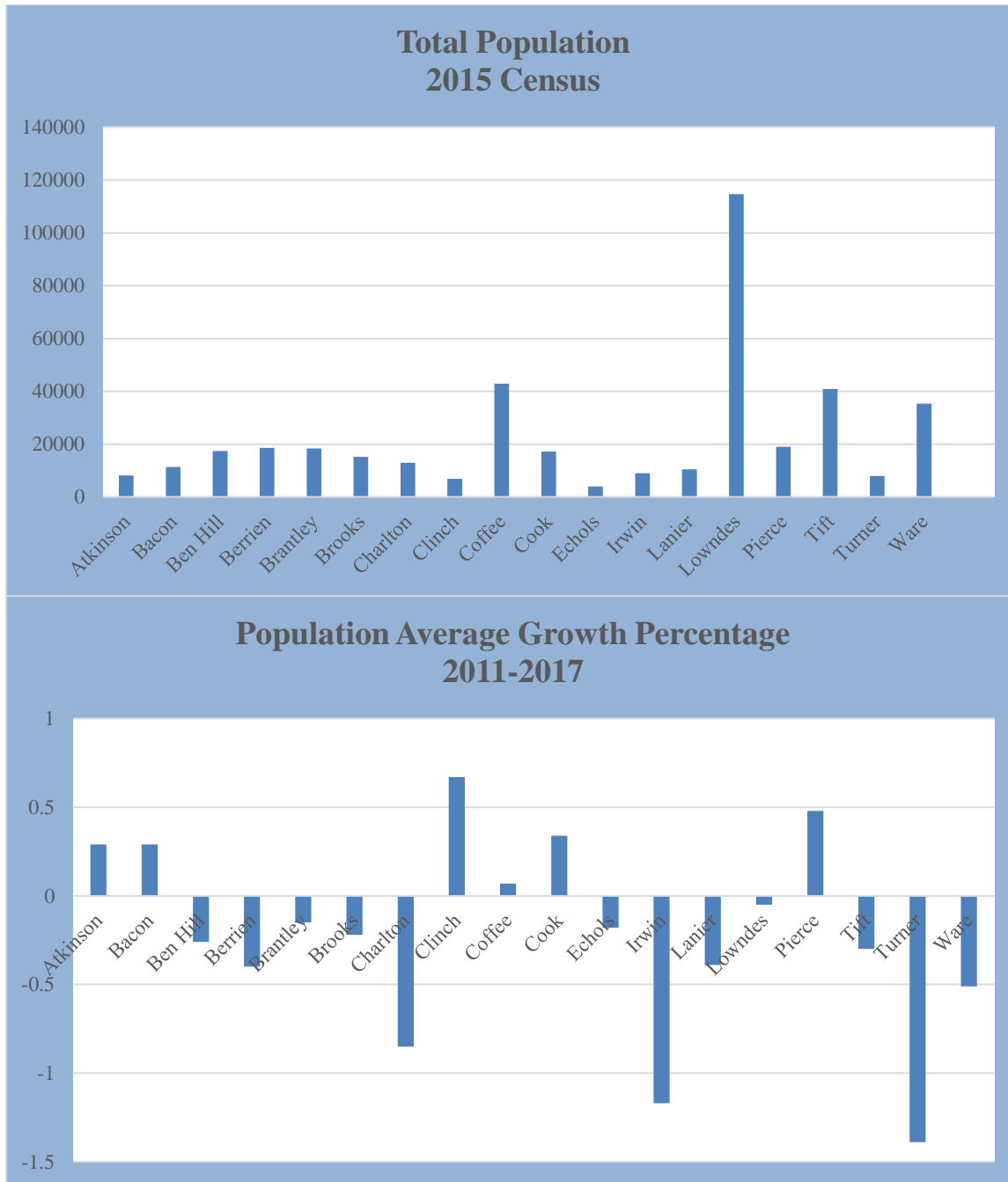
Population Ranking – Georgia Trend April 2017							
County	Rank in Region 2015	Year 2015 Population	Rank in Region 2017	Year 2017 Population	Rank in State 2014	Rank in State 2015	Rank in State 2017	% Average Annual Growth 2011-2017
Lowndes	1	114,691	1	111,620	20	21	22	-0.05
Coffee	2	42,901	2	43,126	46	47	47	0.07
Tift	3	40,888	3	40,629	49	49	49	-0.30
Ware	4	35,364	4	35,073	51	52	53	-0.51
Pierce	5	19,071	5	19,274	92	91	90	0.48
Berrien	6	18,573	6	18,889	91	93	92	-0.40
Brantley	7	18,436	7	18,398	95	94	96	-0.15
Ben Hill	8	17,450	8	17,318	99	100	100	-0.26
Cook	9	17,240	9	17,310	101	101	101	0.34
Brooks	10	15,236	10	15,747	107	107	107	-0.22
Charlton	11	12,936	11	12,734	115	115	115	-0.85
Bacon	12	11,348	12	11,380	121	121	120	0.29
Lanier	13	10,461	13	10,222	125	125	126	-0.39
Irwin	14	8,999	14	9,013	130	132	130	-1.17
Atkinson	15	8,202	15	8,505	140	139	136	0.29
Turner	16	7,979	16	8,113	142	142	141	-1.39
Clinch	17	6,853	17	7,015	145	145	145	0.67
Echols	18	4,004	18	4,072	153	153	153	-0.18
Fulton				1,033,000	1	1	1	1.45
Taliaferro				1,617	159	159	159	-0.87
State Total				10,423,503	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.04

Age Distribution 2015 2015 Census QT-P1															
County	Under 5	%	5-14	%	15-24	%	25-44	%	45-64	%	65-84	%	85 and over	%
Atkinson	716	8.6	1,281	31.0	1,053	12.7	2,264	27.3	2,064	24.9	874	10.6	66	0.5
Bacon	699	6.2	1,576	41.1	1,612	14.3	2,859	25.5	2,906	26.5	1,393	12.4	177	1.6
Ben Hill	1,369	7.8	2,492	14.1	2,262	12.9	4,186	24.0	4,580	26.2	2,221	12.7	379	2.2
Berrien	1,187	6.2	2,641	13.8	2,448	12.9	4,735	24.9	5,014	26.4	2,731	14.3	263	1.4
Brantley	1,219	6.6	2,842	15.1	2,387	13.0	4,336	23.5	5,154	27.9	2,302	12.5	265	1.4
Brooks	952	6.5	1,966	12.6	1,997	12.6	3,513	22.5	4,394	28.1	2,572	16.4	243	1.6
Charlton	662	6.1	1,464	11.1	1,621	12.2	4,182	21.9	3,534	26.9	1,473	11.2	205	1.6
Clinch	625	9.0	991	14.6	692	10.2	1,793	26.4	1,692	25.0	892	13.1	106	1.6
Coffee	2,991	6.8	6,042	14.0	6,709	15.6	11,534	26.8	10,631	24.7	4,675	10.9	501	1.2
Cook	1,173	6.9	2,614	15.3	2,087	12.2	4,393	25.8	4,325	25.4	2,202	12.1	239	1.4
Echols	185	4.6	695	17.2	603	14.9	1,079	26.7	1.006	24.9	462	11.4	18	0.4
Irwin	552	5.9	1,256	13.3	1,154	12.2	2,540	27.0	2,371	25.2	1,380	14.7	155	1.6
Lanier	864	8.3	1,518	14.6	1,051	10.2	3,285	31.6	2,469	23.7	1,069	12.5	147	1.4
Lowndes	8,190	7.2	15,446	14.5	25,102	22.2	28,916	25.5	23,701	21.0	10,587	9.4	1,261	1.1
Pierce	1,273	6.7	2,631	13.9	2,574	13.6	4,703	24.8	4,918	26.0	2,541	13.4	294	1.6
Tift	2,749	6.7	5,795	16.4	6,691	16.4	10,303	24.7	9,704	23.8	4,856	11.9	689	2.5
Turner	483	5.8	1,282	15.4	1,072	12.9	1,952	12.9	2,088	25.0	1,253	15.1	208	2.5
Ware	2,462	6.9	4,692	13.1	4,720	13.2	8,919	25.0	9,306	26.0	4,726	13.3	898	2.5

Age Distribution

- In the Southern Georgia Region the 65 years and older population averages 13% of the population.

- In the region the under 24 year old population group also averages 13% of the population with the exception of Lowndes County, which due to its presence of Valdosta State University has a percentage of 22% in that population group.

- The age groups between 25 and 64 average each about 25% of the population across all counties.

- These percentages highlight one of the major issues confronting the region: that there is a lack of local jobs to encourage the younger population (college graduates and young families with young children) to stay in the area after they have graduated high school or college. The majority of the local youth leaves the area to pursue a college education and/or careers in their chosen fields. Therefore, the population of the post high school age group drops significantly and remains low until retirement age. The population numbers for the older age groups only starts to increase at about middle age, reflecting a trend for those populations to return to retire or care for aging parents. As a result, the older population groups in the region are increasing. Consequently, there is an ever increasing need to plan for the provision of senior services.

Race Distribution

Other
0.80%
0.50%

Mixed
1.54%
1.54%

Hispanic/Latino
8.49%
7.57%

Black
23.60%
24.00%

White
66.40%
74.60%

0.00% 10.00% 20.00% 30.00% 40.00% 50.00% 60.00% 70.00% 80.00%

■ 2010 ■ 2016
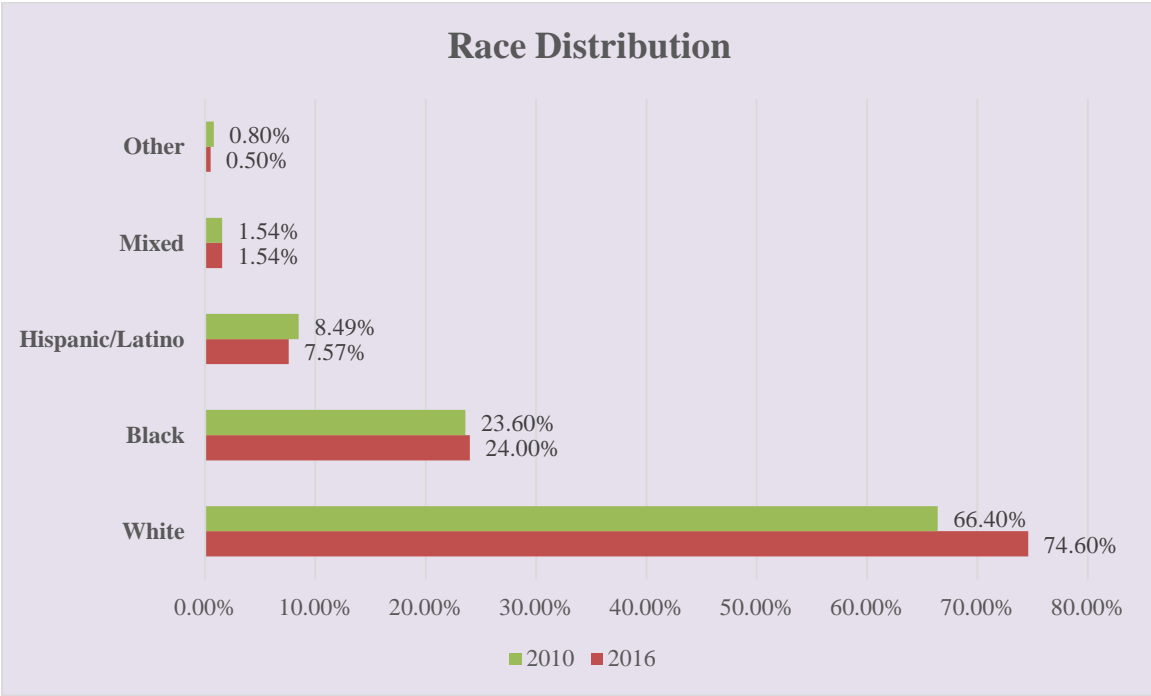
The region's 2010 white population was 66.4% and the 2016 white population was 68.3%. The region's 2010 black population was 23.6% and the 2016 black population was 24.0%of the total population. The region's 2010 Hispanic/Latino population was 8.49% and 2016 was 7.57% of the total population. The 2010 mixed race population was 1.54% and 2016 was 1.54% of the total population. The 2010 "other" race population was 0.8% and 2016 was 0.5% of the total population. Overall the region shows a stable picture in the race distribution which no change in trend in the foreseeable future.

Income Characteristics	2015 Census 2006-2010 ACS B17010; S1701; B19301; B19113							
County	Median Household Income $	Medium Family Income $	Families Below Poverty Level	%	Individuals Below Poverty Level	%	Labor Force	Unemployment Rate %
Atkinson	30,933	38,011	201	24.6	2,370	26.9	3,872	7.3
Bacon	37,162	48,555	176	12.9	1,919	17.7	5,033	4.4
Ben Hill	29,994	36,250	363	30.3	6,024	35.3	5,318	9.7
Berrien	31,835	42,017	408	21.5	4,923	26.2	7,010	6.9
Brantley	37,206	44,396	440	14.8	3,812	21.0	6,918	10.9
Brooks	32,663	44,031	394	21.3	4,265	27.6	6,740	17.0
Charlton	42,778	52,587	265	10.4	2,010	17.2	4,789	13.8
Clinch	24,015	40,863	183	32.1	2,339	35.0	2,843	10.7
Coffee	33,965	41,968	1,000	17.9	9,975	25.5	17,395	8.3
Cook	35,683	41,553	451	20.6	4,244	25.1	7,252	6.6
Echols	32,959	42,955	118	22.9	4,044	29.0	1,840	10.1
Irwin	34,156	46,055	216	19.5	2,300	26.0	3,058	6.8
Lanier	37,605	48,713	350	22.0	2,675	26.6	3,783	14.6
Lowndes	36,834	48,391	2,947	18.8	28,907	26.5	50,355	13.0
Pierce	40,247	48,180	457	18.9	4,455	23.7	8,106	8.9
Tift	37,653	47,346	760	22.8	11,372	29.2	18,001	5.8
Turner	31,806	38,177	189	18.8	2,027	25.4	3,243	12.5
Ware	34,909	42,029	1,269	23.4	9,686	29.2	14,747	7.2

Per Capita Income Comparison – Georgia Trend April 2017								
County	Rank in Region 2015	Year 2015 Per Capita Income $	Rank in Region 2017	Year 2017 Per Capita Income $	Rank in State 2014	Rank in State 2015	Rank in State 2017	% Average Annual Growth 2011-2017
Tift	1	34,410	1	40,156	**57**	**45**	**21**	**4.89**
Lowndes	2	34,200	2	35,263	**68**	**50**	**48**	**2.54**
Turner	3	33,620	3	33,572	**27**	**57**	**69**	**2.14**
Brooks	4	33,158	4	33,445	**21**	**65**	**71**	**1.33**
Pierce	5	32,003	5	32,615	**86**	**81**	**87**	**1.88**
Ware	6	31,207	6	32,395	**120**	**98**	**92**	**2.66**
Bacon	7	30,633	7	30,327	**124**	**101**	**117**	**2.80**
Clinch	10	29,072	8	30,254	**141**	**123**	**119**	**1.93**
Coffee	8	29,333	9	29,910	**131**	**118**	**120**	**2.60**
Berrien	9	29,187	10	29,526	**76**	**120**	**123**	**2.11**
Irwin	12	28,534	11	29,001	**50**	**128**	**125**	**0.34**
Ben Hill	11	28,895	12	28,728	**121**	**125**	**129**	**1.49**
Cook	14	26,998	13	27,600	**129**	**139**	**139**	**1.19**
Atkinson	13	27,892	14	27,086	**144**	**133**	**143**	**2.72**
Charlton	16	24,843	15	26,709	**157**	**151**	**147**	**4.36**
Brantley	18	24,172	16	25,578	**148**	**154**	**149**	**2.67**
Lanier	17	24,558	17	25,036	**133**	**152**	**152**	**2.01**
Echols	15	26,045	18	24,586	**123**	**147**	**154**	**2.76**
Fulton				72,527	*1*	*1*	*1*	*1.80*
Wheeler				16,600	*159*	*159*	*159*	*1.90*
State Average				41,788	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*2.33*

<u>Income</u>

- **Regional Income Figures 2015:**
  - Average median household income = $34,578
  - Average median family income = $45,067
  - Per Capita Income average =$22,186
  - Charlton County has largest median family income at $52,587, in spite of having a -0.85% population loss between 2011 and 2017. Bacon, Lanier, Lowndes and Pierce Counties also have higher median family incomes, even if counties like Charlton, Lanier and Lowndes lost some population over that ten year period.

- **Regional Poverty Figures 2015:**
  - Average poverty rate = 22.6%
  - Highest rate of Families below Poverty Level = Clinch County, 32.1%
  - Lowest rate of Families below Poverty Level = Charlton County, 10.4%
  - Sixteen of the Region's eighteen counties are considered to be areas of persistent poverty (more than 20% of a county's population lives below the poverty threshold). The two counties that were below the 20% threshold for individuals below the poverty level were Bacon, and Charlton County.

- **Regional Unemployment Figures 2015:**
  - Average unemployment rate = 11.8%
  - Highest unemployment rate = Brooks County, 17.0%
  - Lowest unemployment rate = Bacon County, 4.4%

ii) Economic Development

Even though population has held fairly steady in the region, job growth has been more robust and most of our counties have seen an increase in employment. The greatest job growth has been in Atkinson County, with an annual average 9.85 percent employment increase as reported by Georgia Trend. Bacon and Lanier Counties have also seen some strong employment growth. Among the counties that have seen a decrease in employment, the decrease has fortunately been fairly small, with nothing below -2.79 percent.

Job growth in Georgia has been occurring at a faster rate than population, with an average of 2.54 percent per year. Likewise, personal income statewide has been growing at an average of 2.33 percent per year. The top and bottom counties in the state haven't changed; Fulton County

is still number one in terms of population, number of jobs, and per capita income; Taliaferro County still has the smallest population and smallest employment, ranking #159 in the state; and Wheeler County still has the lowest per capita income in the state. In our region, the rankings of our counties within the state have shifted around slightly, but not by very much.

Business Summary

- The majority of businesses in the region are classified as **Other Services** such as Insurance, Banking, etc. (41%) or **Retail Trade** (18%). **Construction** and **Manufacturing** are the next largest industry sectors, constituting 8.7% and 8.0% of all businesses respectively. The "other" category captures all businesses that are not specifically mentioned under the main categories in the table.

- The **Information Technology** and **Healthcare Industries** are the smallest industries in all counties. Given the aging of the population, more attention should be focused on providing quality healthcare throughout the region. Focus should also be given to the Information Technology Sector which is attractive to college graduates and encourages home-based start-up businesses that do not require a significant amount of capital, but significantly increases the skilled workforce.

- It is interesting to note that although most of our region is rural, only three counties Echols (55.5%), Lanier (22.8%) and Clinch (15.7%), have higher percentages in **Agriculture** than in either of the two largest industries of **Other Services** and **Retail Trade**. These numbers would support the idea that the region is moving from an agricultural and manufacturing base to the service industries.

Business Summary 2015 GDOL, Area Labor Profiles

	Total # Businesses	Agricultural & Mining	%	Construction	%	Manuf/Transp Warehouse	%	Retail Trade	%	Information	%	Health Care	%	Other Service	%	Govt	%	Other	%
Atkinson	125	12	3.4	2	.06	19	27.8	25	6.8	0	0	6	4.5	36	37.3	20	20.09	5	.09
Bacon	267	36	10.7	12	0.9	40	35.8	45	9.8	2	.5	15	4.3	89	27.0	23	14.5	12	1.3
Ben Hill	376	13	0.8	17	0.8	38	30.0	74	14.0	4	0.6	32	5.9	147	29.27	25	17.7	26	1.7
Berrien	285	19	7.9	21	2.2	23	0.4	53	11.3	4	0.4	16	5.7	107	44.9	28	26.1	17	1.1
Brantley	238	18	4.6	44	7.7	25	11.2	33	9.6	2	1.2	10	5.7	63	23.5	29	36.5	14	1.2
Brooks	297	46	14.2	23	2.6	14	7.5	42	7.5	3	0.3	18	9.8	96	26	29	22.2 26	26	9.9
Charlton	175	18	9.5	18	2.4	16	14.5	28	9.1	2	0.8	5	3.9	59	37.2	19	22.2	10	1.2
Clinch	181	37	15.7	7	1.1	15	33.7	25	6.7	4	2.1	11	5.4	49	13.7	23	20.09	10	0.7
Coffee	958	44	2.9	67	6.3	87	25.8	200	11.7	9	0.5	93	11.7	335	24.5	58	15.1	65	1.5
Cook	390	27	12.0	34	5.6	41	12.0	61	15.2	3	1.0	29	4.7	133	20.03	39	28.7	23	1.5
Echols	56	18	55.5	5	6.0	5	2.0	5	1.1	0	0.0	2	5.0	10	7.3	10	28.1	1	2.0
Irwin	155	12	10.4	14	8.0	8	6.4	31	10.1	2	1.6	10	6.5	44	38.5	21	33.9	13	0.6
Lanier	130	11	22.8	15	1.6	10	8.9	19	7.3	1	0.7	6	2.1	11	20.1	22	37.2	5	1.8
Lowndes	2,970	33	0.6	264	5.0	182	13.8	495	13.7	25	3.6	368	9.6	1,264	30.5	112	21.1	227	2.1
Pierce	383	25	4.5	62	8.1	30	16.8	58	12.5	4	0.6	25	7.8	127	29.0	22	19.0	27	1.7
Tift	1,192	46	2.5	85	2.9	74	11.4	222	14.4	9	0.9	106	7.2	510	31.1	72	27.6	68	2.0
Turner	194	15	702	6	0.6	17	16.9	33	12.5	1	1.1	12	6.9	99	31.0	24	24.2	11	0.7
Ware	982	25	1.5	68	2.9	66	14.0	194	15.7	9	0.9	118	16.9	360	23.5	67	20.0	75	4.6

County	Rank in Region 2015	Year 2015 Employment	Rank in Region 2017	Year 2017 Employment	Rank in State 2014	Rank in State 2015	Rank in State 2017	% Average Annual Growth 2011-2017
Employment Comparison– Georgia Trend April 2017								
Lowndes	1	48,169	1	49,612	17	17	17	1.39
Tift	2	18,685	2	19,596	37	37	38	1.49
Coffee	4	15,691	3	16,933	41	42	42	2.66
Ware	3	14,589	4	15,186	45	45	45	0.95
Ben Hill	5	5,549	5	5,336	86	87	88	-1.15
Bacon	6	4,180	6	4,412	99	98	97	4.49
Pierce	7	3,915	7	4,126	101	99	99	2.29
Cook	8	3,909	8	4,072	98	100	100	0.66
Berrien	9	3,412	9	3,195	104	104	109	-2.64
Brooks	10	3,018	10	2,900	111	111	114	-1.66
Clinch	11	2,483	11	2,509	121	119	118	0.42
Atkinson	15	1,953	12	2,414	130	128	119	9.85
Brantley	12	2,125	13	2,241	124	124	124	1.68
Turner	13	2,109	14	2,137	127	125	127	0.33
Charlton	14	2,005	15	1,974	126	127	128	-1.34
Irwin	16	1,769	16	1,711	129	130	134	-2.79
Lanier	17	1,580	17	1,648	137	137	136	3.56
Echols	18	755	18	692	150	152	152	-2.01
Fulton				842,267	1	1	1	2.72
Taliaferro				191	159	159	159	3.23
State Total				4,370,882	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.54

PERCENTAGE OF JOB GROWTH 2015
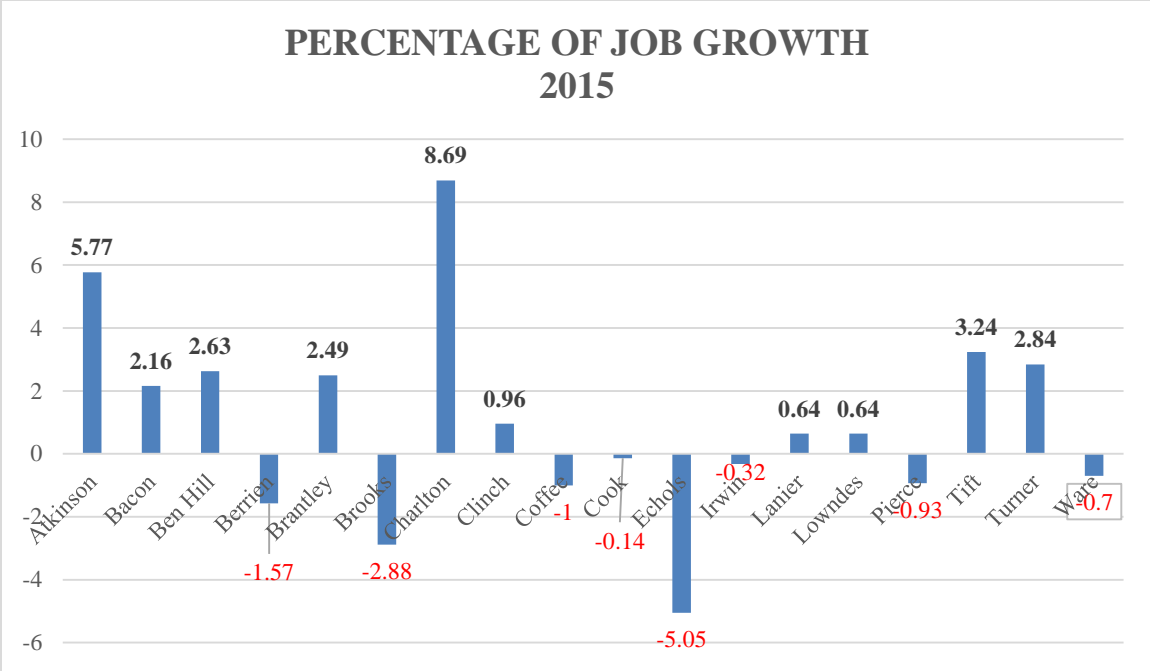
Employment Comparison

- Seven of the eighteen counties experienced a loss of employment for the period 2011 – 2015.

- Six of the eighteen experienced a loss in 2017. Ten counties gained employment; Lanier (3.56), Bacon (4.49), Atkinson (9.85), Pierce (0.95), Brantley (1.68), Cook (9.85), Lowndes (1.39), Tift (1.49), Ware (0.95), and Turner (0.33).

- Of the eight counties that lost employment, five had a larger loss percentage than that of the State of Georgia.

	Total	Less than 9th Grade		9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma		High Schools Graduate, GED or equivalent		Some College, no degree		Associate's Degree		Bachelor's Degree		Graduate or Professional Degree	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Atkinson	5935	517	376	340	364	1183	1024	349	503	102	228	132	143	39	94
Bacon	8454	357	195	534	562	1812	1484	532	678	169	400	264	369	124	231
Ben Hill	10087	278	327	803	896	2734	2716	971	1149	326	633	411	415	120	308
Berrien	14372	338	295	921	831	2718	2788	1050	1359	655	860	453	464	314	361
Brantley	13634	379	178	1095	881	3119	2975	1014	1189	1304	440	208	398	103	347
Brooks	12151	303	303	902	851	2144	2444	1222	1067	333	417	392	591	77	207
Charlton	10588	720	262	932	459	2199	2277	878	879	249	297	245	307	138	245
Clinch	4958	209	201	356	437	905	815	484	395	64	148	200	181	39	233
Coffee	32230	857	810	2695	1813	6985	5717	1997	2639	876	1234	1109	1254	445	926
Cook	12521	447	378	960	984	2296	2669	859	1005	297	390	389	524	238	298
Echols	2963	177	216	181	156	588	473	273	252	36	132	58	106	11	35
Irwin	7265	77	148	425	312	1629	1676	824	568	161	395	160	160	158	208
Lanier	7772	404	250	479	512	1127	1209	930	733	314	339	325	210	59	291
Lowndes	85294	1505	1629	3950	3363	12263	11347	8186	2543	2331	3176	4217	4949	2989	2968
Pierce	14094	452	325	777	954	3066	1223	1137	1406	246	491	520	438	273	541
Tift	30558	928	955	1679	1641	4587	5234	2392	2382	963	1741	1069	1148	951	1126
Turner	6220	240	308	504	372	1169	953	476	505	136	342	153	282	58	148
Ware	27306	728	625	1729	1375	5393	5270	2191	2679	639	1089	833	910	614	718

Education of the Labor Force

- The highest numbers for educational attainment in the region are for high school graduation, GED or equivalent for all age groups. Those numbers drop off drastically for post-secondary education with a degree.

- As these numbers begin to decrease, however, a definite increase can be observed in the percentage of the 45-64 age group with a Bachelor's Degree or Graduate or Professional Degree, especially among woman. This seems to indicate that more people are going back to school later in life after rearing their families or retiring from work

- A look at the educational attainment of the workforce by gender shows that males represent the vast majority of people without a high school diploma, possibly reflecting early recruitment into the workforce. Of those obtaining a high school diploma only, the number of males and females is fairly even. However, females represent a large majority of the population that obtains a college education and beyond. This supports the above referenced idea that more people are returning to school, particularly post-secondary educations, after rearing their families.

- With technical schools and colleges throughout the southern region, there are numerous resources available for education and training. There are also programs set up to help those who are unemployed to further their skills.

- Valdosta State University offers assistance for small businesses thru their UGA Small Business Development Center. This assistance is for many of the counties in the region.

- Farming and manufacturing businesses have been on the decline in southern Georgia but opportunities in the medical field, retail trade, offices, education and restaurants, have been on the rise. The smaller communities seem to be those who have the most decline in businesses.

Economic Resources:
Evaluate the development agencies, programs, tools, education, training and other economic resources available to the region's businesses and residents.

Economic Trends:
Evaluate economic trends that are ongoing in the region, including which sectors, industries or employers are declining and which are growing. Also evaluate any unique situations, major employers and important new developments for their impact on the region.

iii) Housing

- Regional Housing Statistics:
  - Family = 58.77% of total housing units
  - Multi-Family = 8.93% of total housing units
  - Manufactured Homes = 32.91% of total single family housing units are manufactured homes

- The large number of manufactured homes may be attributed to the fact that they are easy to purchase, are less costly, and can be quickly set up and ready for move in, even in rural areas.

- The low numbers for Multi-Family housing stock are reflective of a more agrarian and rural region where there are few areas with sufficient population density to warrant multi-family housing development. This is supported by the fact that the highest numbers of multi-family housing occur in counties with larger urban areas and population centers.

- There is a shortage of accessible, affordable housing throughout the region for independent living. Section 8 Housing is available in some areas and there is a need for more affordable housing for persons on a fixed/limited income, such as those with disabilities. Currently 13.3% of the regional population has a disability. Section 8 Housing would allow them to pay no more than 30% of their income for rent and the remaining would be paid by a government agency, most often Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) also can assist those individuals on a fixed income. Thru DCA, an individual can apply for assistance thru the Housing Choice Voucher Program. This program currently serves 149 of the 159 counties in Georgia.

Value of Housing Stock 2015 US Census B25075							
	Total	Less than $50,000	$50,000-$100,000	$100,000-$200,000	$200,000-$500,000	$500,000-$1,000,000	Above $1,000,000
Atkinson	1,985	671	582	431	246	0	55
Bacon	2,723	1,243	582	550	320	20	0
Ben Hill	4,101	1,095	1,631	1,060	277	9	29
Berrien	5,074	1,512	1,484	1,423	610	43	2
Brantley	5,258	2,027	1,456	1,359	350	12	54
Brooks	4,550	1,255	1,143	1,674	438	22	18
Charlton	2,776	736	979	873	188	0	0
Clinch	1,781	802	455	324	200	0	0
Coffee	9,55.	2,989	2,637	2,687	1,148	31	61
Cook	4,190	1,201	1,164	1,195	534	71	25
Echols	932	319	305	197	106	4	1
Irwin	2,450	813	762	668	192	15	0
Lanier	2,364	556	617	913	238	40	0
Lowndes	20,190	2,627	4,178	8,403	4,450	487	45
Pierce	5,149	1,355	1,292	1,619	767	94	22
Tift	8,202	1,745	1,997	2,874	1,442	83	61
Turner	2,117	744	666	530	139	32	6
Ware	8,936	2,565	2,966	2,621	683	71	303

<u>Value of Housing Stock</u>

General Housing Stock Values:
- 26.26% are less than $50,000
- 26.96% are $50,000 - $100,000
- 31.84% are $100,000 - $200,000
- 13.35% are $200,000 - $500,000
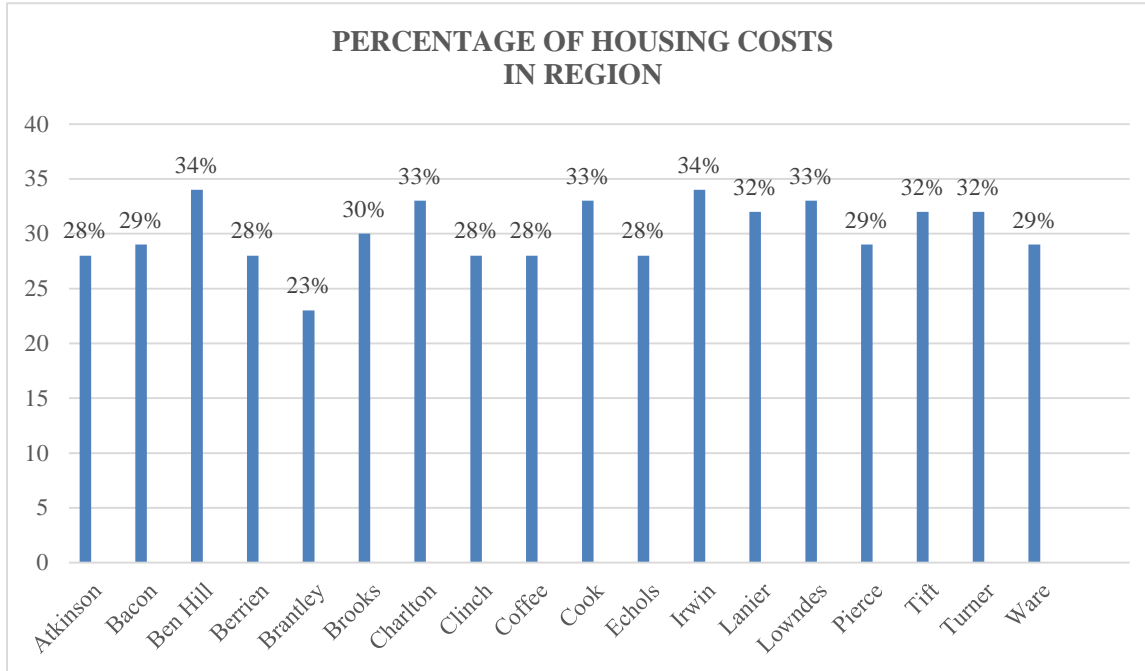- 0.1% are $500,000 - $1,000,000
- 1.2% are above $1,000,000

Coffee and Tift counties have 61 structures valued above $1,000,000, and Atkinson County has 55 structures.

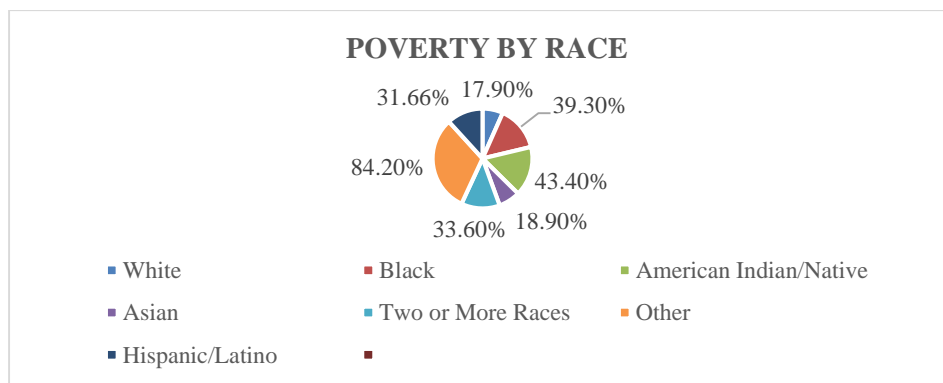| Housing Characteristics 2015 US Census B25024; B25034; B25075							
County	Total Units	Single Family	%	Multi-Family	%	Manufactured Homes	%
Atkinson	3,476	1,714	49.3	237	6.9	1,515	43.6
Bacon	4,758	2,781	58.4	306	6.2	1,671	35.1
Ben Hill	7,914	4,942	62.4	1,069	13.5	1,903	24.0
Berrien	8,650	5,229	60.4	434	5.0	2,987	50.8
Brantley	7,963	3,642	45.7	509	2.8	4,048	49.0
Brooks	7,660	4754	62.1	509	6.7	2391	31.2
Charlton	4,436	2,453	55.3	88	2.0	1,869	42.1
Clinch	2,974	1,799	60.0	319	10.7	856	28.8
Coffee	16,974	9,562	56.3	1,356	8.4	5,964	35.1
Cook	7,247	4,326	59.7	448	6.1	2,473	34.1
Echols	1,665	836	50.2	141	5.8	732	44.0
Irwin	4,024	2,571	63.8	270	6.8	1,183	29.4
Lanier	4,298	2,488	57.9	396	11.0	1,414	32.9
Lowndes	45,399	30,426	67.0	10,112	22.2	4,822	10.6
Pierce	7,964	5,024	63.1	450	5.7	2,463	30.0
Tift	16,414	9,632	58.7	2,666	16.2	4,116	25.1
Turner	3,827	2,347	61.4	504	13.2	976	25.5
Ware	16,394	10,853	66.2	2,086	11.6	3,452	21.1

The largest gain of housing stock occurred in the twenty year period between 1980 and 1999. After 1999, the number of new structures begins to drop. Lowndes County and Ware County both contain the highest number of older structures (those built in 1939 or earlier).

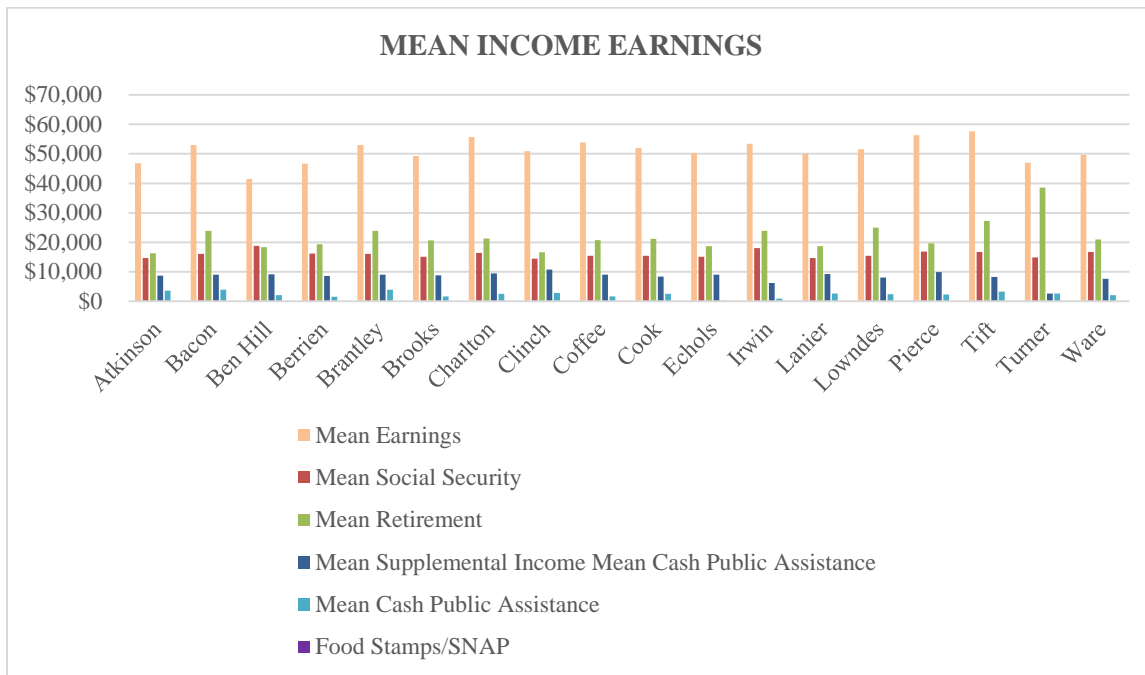## Number of Residential Structures by Age and County 2010 US Census
B25034

County	Built 2010 or later	Built 2000 to 2009	Built 1990 to 1999	Built 1980 to 1989	Built 1970 to 1979	Built 1960 to 1969	Built 1950 to 1959	Built 1940 to 1949	Built 1939 or earlier
Atkinson	21	318	877	581	721	221	296	149	348
Bacon	142	434	999	658	1,362	469	364	197	417
Ben Hill	4	1,068	1,433	1,245	1,860	1,070	501	454	726
Berrien	134	1,502	2,424	1,507	1,224	602	623	398	1,052
Brantley	125	1,771	2,430	2,437	1,055	433	287	198	299
Brooks	96	1,204	2,175	1,205	1,237	650	584	282	882
Charlton	136	653	1,121	729	619	516	447	195	395
Clinch	22	212	571	431	555	395	244	119	183
Coffee	128	2,721	4,148	3,568	2,863	1,572	972	521	1,209
Cook	153	1,021	1,883	1,101	1,361	788	494	187	673
Echols	5	147	435	349	56	215	215	12	18
Irwin	7	322	800	754	586	488	467	186	451
Lanier	244	1,302	977	990	473	367	406	95	198
Lowndes	1,403	9,638	8,847	7,192	6,808	3,569	4,087	1,494	2,005
Pierce	175	1,692	2,995	3,495	2,686	1,851	1,531	919	853
Tift	293	2,107	2,995	3,495	2,686	1,851	1,531	919	853
Turner	38	615	609	720	689	484	374	179	517
Ware	50	1,822	2,850	1,745	2,457	2,223	2,630	1,135	2,004

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSING COSTS IN REGION

A bar chart showing the percentage of housing costs by county:

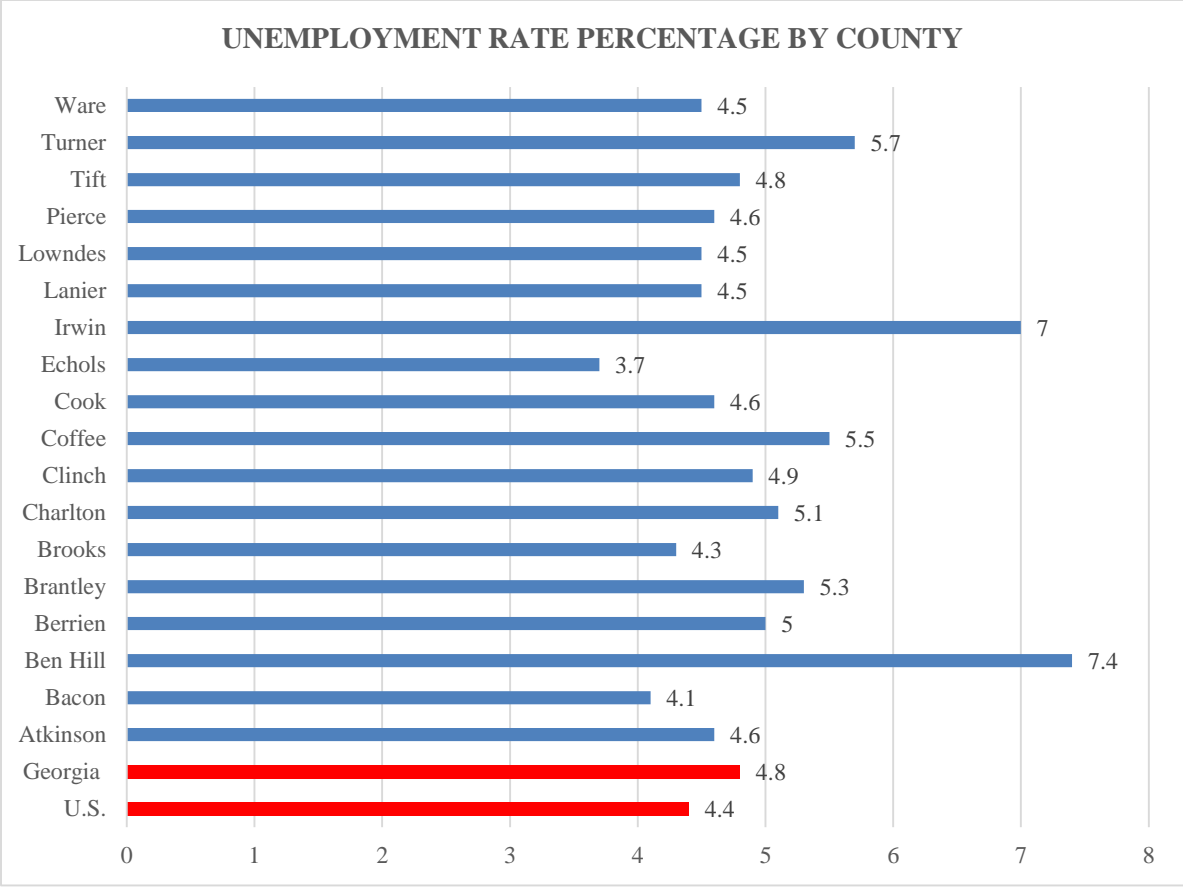| County	Percentage
Atkinson	28%
Bacon	29%
Ben Hill	34%
Berrien	28%
Brantley	23%
Brooks	30%
Charlton	33%
Clinch	28%
Coffee	28%
Cook	33%
Echols	28%
Irwin	34%
Lanier	32%
Lowndes	33%
Pierce	29%
Tift	32%
Turner	32%
Ware	29%

There are currently 8 of the 18 counties cost-burdened with paying 30% or more of net income on total housing costs. Ben Hill County and Irwin County are paying 34% total housing costs. Brantley County is paying the least amount at 23% of total housing costs. There are 10 counties paying less than 30% of their net income for housing. At the present time there are no counties severely cost-burned, paying 50% or more of total net income. It has been recommended that no household pay more than 30% of net income on housing. There is a need for more affordable housing throughout the region, especially for the 8 counties with the burdened of 30% or more being spent on housing. The average age of householder in the region is 33.

POVERTY BY RACE

A pie chart showing poverty by race:

- 17.90% Hispanic/Latino
- 39.30% Black
- 43.40% American Indian/Native
- 18.90% Asian
- 33.60% Two or More Races
- 84.20% Other
- 31.66% (White/Hispanic portion)

Legend:
- White
- Black
- American Indian/Native
- Asian
- Two or More Races
- Other
- Hispanic/Latino

There is 26.8% of the regions total population of 411,606 living in poverty. Of that population 33.60% living in poverty is white, 39.30% is black, 31.66% is Hispanic/Latino, 43.40% is American Indian/Native, 18.90% is Asian, 33.60% is two or more races and 84.20 is other races. The poverty is due in part to those who are depending on Social Security and other supplements and those who are unemployed.

MEAN INCOME EARNINGS

Mean Earnings
Mean Social Security
Mean Retirement
Mean Supplemental Income Mean Cash Public Assistance
Mean Cash Public Assistance
Food Stamps/SNAP

The Mean Dollars earned in the region is averaged out at $51,032 on an annual basis. Tift County has the highest earned income of $57,642. The lowest is Ben Hill County at $41,436. There are a total of 47,224 with Social Security Income, which averages $15,957 for the region. There are 22,786 people within the region receiving retirement benefits at an average of $21,945. There are 11,515 within the region receiving a supplemental income (SSI), averaging out at $8,738. There are a total of 2,494 within the region receiving cash public assistance, averaging at $2,463. A total of 29,085 within the region receives food stamps/SNAP assistance.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE PERCENTAGE BY COUNTY

County	Rate
Ware	4.5
Turner	5.7
Tift	4.8
Pierce	4.6
Lowndes	4.5
Lanier	4.5
Irwin	7
Echols	3.7
Cook	4.6
Coffee	5.5
Clinch	4.9
Charlton	5.1
Brooks	4.3
Brantley	5.3
Berrien	5
Ben Hill	7.4
Bacon	4.1
Atkinson	4.6
Georgia	4.8
U.S.	4.4

The unemployment rate from June 2016-June 2017 averaged 4.8% in Georgia and 4.4% in the US. The unemployment average for the 18 county southern region is currently at 4.73%. Of the 18 counties, Irwin County has the highest unemployment rate at 7.0%. This is due to lack of jobs within the community and people are having to travel outside of the county for employment.

| HOUSING TYPES Censu.Gov/American FactFinder							
COUNTY	TOTAL	SINGLE-FAMILY	DUPLEX	APARTMENTS	MOBILE HOMES	BOAT, RV, Van, ETC.	AVERAGE PERSONS LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD RENTD	AVERAGE PERSONS LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD OWNED
Atkinson	3476	1691	23	237	1515	10	2.44	2.37
Bacon	4758	2781	153	153	1671	0	3.1	2.68
Ben Hill	7914	4942	2527	812	1903	0	2.62	2.71
Berrien	8650	5229	124	310	2987	0	2.79	2.68
Brantley	7963	3642	121	103	4048	49	2.54	2.86
Brooks	7660	4754	83	426	2391	6	2.38	2.37
Charlton	4436	2453	21	67	1869	26	3.24	3.35
Clinch	3476	1714	51	186	1515	10	2.68	2.41
Coffee	16974	9654	439	917	5964	0	2.73	2.72
Cook	7247	4326	53	395	2473	0	2.95	2.64
Echols	1665	836	22	75	732	0	2.92	2.83
Irwin	4024	2571	156	114	1183	0	2.87	2.66
Lanier	4928	2488	107	289	1414	0	2.74	2.71
Lowndes	45399	30426	1686	8426	4822	39	2.7	2.86
Pierce	7964	5024	121	329	2463	27	2.76	2.71
Tift	16414	9632	814	1852	4116	0	2.84	2.7
Turner	3827	2347	168	336	976	0	2.71	2.6
Ware	16394	10853	745	1341	3452	3	2.44	2.37

There is a total of 173,169 housing units within the region. Of the total housing units, 50.40% are single-family units, 4.12% are duplexes, 9.09% are apartments, 25.27% are mobile homes, and 9.44% are boats, RV's, vans, etc. There are 2.77% of people who rent and 2.68% who own homes.

HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE Census.Gov/American FactFinder							
COUNTY	TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC/ LATINO	AMERICAN INDIAN/ NATIVE	ASIAN	2 OR MORE RACES	OTHER
Atkinson	3476	5721	1574	2010	36	5	120	1167
Bacon	4758	8883	1809	879	0	137	135	101
Ben Hill	7914	10862	6490	1081	72	0	317	237
Berrien	8650	16002	2174	930	82	141	415	205
Brantley	7963	17440	588	390	6	205	173	14
Brooks	7660	9436	5545	863	21	117	201	614
Charlton	4436	9541	3391	1489	126	27	129	178
Clinch	3476	4685	5721	1914	84	33	141	201
Coffee	16974	28740	12228	4672	194	284	264	1792
Cook	7247	11843	4846	1000	185	59	167	267
Echols	1665	3497	106	1036	53	73	118	437
Irwin	4024	6668	2832	95	45	8	217	77
Lanier	4298	7636	7649	550	33	84	107	102
Lowndes	45399	67836	42571	6061	850	2617	2935	2341
Pierce	7964	16915	1888	970	123	172	566	422
Tift	16414	26625	12316	4414	298	679	529	1342
Turner	3827	4712	3466	356	33	96	75	106
Ware	16394	23749	10810	1300	241	389	268	793

There is a total of 173,169 households within the region. Of those households there are 272,791 who are white, 126,004 who are black, 30,010 Hispanic/Latino, 2,482 American Indian/Native, 5126 Asian, 6,877 that are 2 or more races and 10,396 other.

OCCUPATION BY HOUSEHOLDS Census.Gov/American FactFinder					
COUNTY	TOTAL EMPLOYED	MANAGEMENT, BUSINESS, SCIENCE, & ARTS	SERVICE (MANUFACTURING, WHOLESALE)	SALES AND OFFICE	NATURAL RESOURCES, CONSTRUCTION, & MAINTENANCE	PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, AND MATERIAL MOVING
Atkinson	3389	630	462	807	688	802
Bacon	4598	1320	501	1000	906	871
Ben Hill	6019	1619	1238	1169	577	1416
Berrien	6457	4680	1316	1456	1050	955
Brantley	6702	1834	1239	1473	1221	935
Brooks	5703	1414	895	1433	912	1049
Charlton	4705	1320	1055	641	763	926
Clinch	2309	693	288	444	348	536
Coffee	15358	4854	2473	3280	1298	3453
Cook	7043	1787	1322	1568	721	1645
Echols	1675	363	221	321	484	286
Irwin	3158	976	475	686	222	799
Lanier	3476	987	535	1107	349	498
Lowndes	45595	13314	9767	12718	4002	5794
Pierce	7262	2322	1027	1577	1046	1290
Tift	16038	4747	3017	3914	2167	2193
Turner	2900	951	405	741	437	366
Ware	13022	3996	2183	2894	1641	2308

There are 152,279 people employed within the region. 31.39% are employed in management/business/science/arts, 18.66% are employed within the field of service (manufacturing, wholesale), 24.44% are employed in sales and office, 11.71% are employed are employed in natural resources and 17.1% are employed in production/transportation/material moving.

AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING UNITS
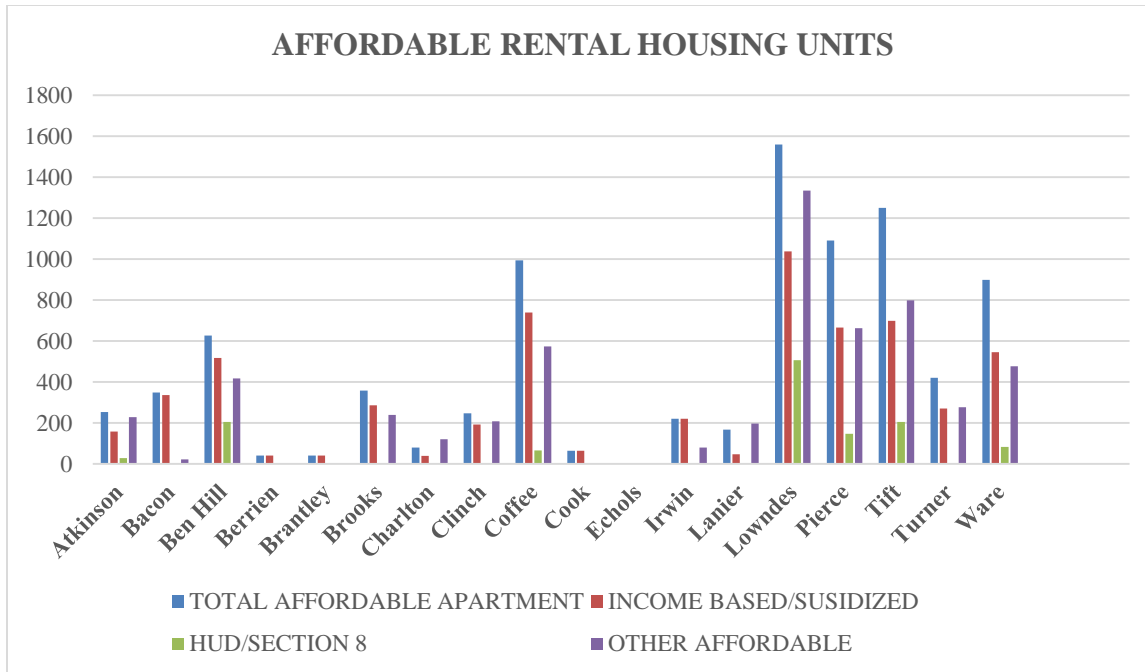
There are a total of 168,158 total affordable housing apartment units in the State of Georgia with 84,215 income based assistance, 25,927 Section 8 (HUD) units and 105,544 other affordable units. Income based units are based on 30% of a renters adjustable gross income. There is an indefinite waiting list in all he counties with housing assistance. Income based housing is available for families, senior citizens, disabled individuals and single-parents.

Echols County does not have affordable housing because more than 90% of its land s are forested and under contracts with private companies. Echols County is one of Georgia's least populated counties.
The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) offers housing opportunities for persons with Aids (HOPWA) and the US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). They provided assistance to anyone who is HIVV+, low income and required to meet their criteria. Funds are provided for short-term assistance to families and individuals affected or infected with HIV. Funds are limited for help with homeless, single-with children, families and individuals. The amount of financial support is based on the county, size of household and income. This assistance is limited and is available in the southern region to the counties of Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Brantley, Brooks, Clinch, Coffee, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes and Ware. Funds help to cover the costs of rent, mortgage, utilities, and offers resources and services support.

Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) offers assistance with the aging and those with disabilities thru Georgia's Aging & Disability Resource Connection. They offer help with information of resources, education and funding that may be available to the communities.

	Total	<5 minutes	5-9 minutes	10 – 14 minutes	15 – 19 minutes	20 – 14 minutes	25-29 minutes	30 – 34 minutes	35 – 39 minutes	40 – 44 minutes	45 – 59 minutes	60 – 89 minutes	90< minutes
Atkinson	3,311	157	324	546	530	461	261	603	101	67	151	55	55
Bacon	4,539	257	648	1,288	760	294	189	524	76	53	305	7	138
Ben Hill	5,947	354	1,006	1,316	1,620	458	202	406	76	64	263	83	39
Berrien	6,341	270	649	891	1,212	853	396	969	217	139	469	126	150
Brantley	6,350	270	355	538	857	733	411	1,518	2527	427	944	686	76
Brooks	5,061	216	397	703	808	864	412	862	100	34	433	135	96
Charlton	4,412	509	798	492	228	354	102	372	91	125	748	396	197
Clinch	2,216	210	607	432	296	117	25	108	45	101	175	49	51
Coffee	14,764	535	1,314	3,573	4,268	1,358	436	1,560	124	162	760	528	146
Cook	6,638	198	677	754	911	977	625	1,316	189	162	403	184	242
Echols	1,597	22	79	220	159	266	120	487	74	25	88	45	12
Irwin	2,953	208	225	489	619	330	198	616	84	43	27	14	100
Lanier	3,527	304	327	441	390	325	345	771	108	214	169	77	86
Lowndes	45,863	1,930	6,191	9,821	11,650	7,292	1,849	3,039	483	468	1,498	549	990
Pierce	7,011	164	866	1,005	1,271	1,243	243	693	129	90	347	557	403
Tift	16,587	657	2,474	3,585	3,737	1,502	366	964	161	146	862	525	337
Turner	2,700	122	534	290	435	195	212	493	85	57	203	130	15
Ware	12,505	508	2,347	3,503	2,136	1,385	317	954	105	189	329	312	420

Travel Time to work 2010 US Census B08303
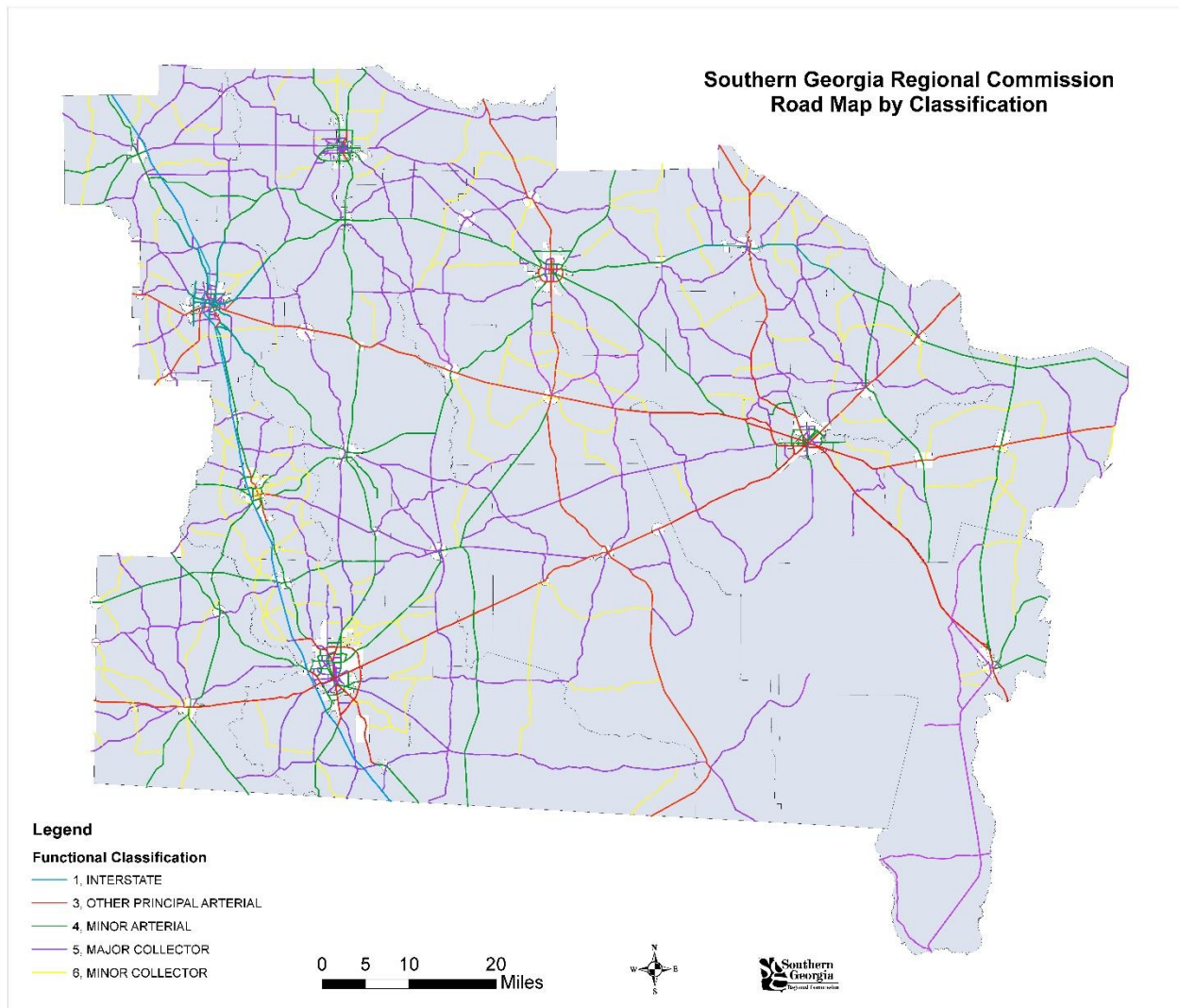
Travel Time to Work

- Residents have to travel further to find work as evident by the elevated spikes in 30 minute and 6 minute travel times.

- The counties with the shortest commute times (5-20 minutes) are those with larger commercial areas (Lowndes, Tift, Ware, Ben Hill and Coffee County).

iv) Community Facilities and Services

Evaluate the level of service provision throughout the region. At a minimum, the following services should be considered: water supply and treatment, sewerage systems and wastewater treatment, fire protection, public safety, parks and recreation, storm-water management, solid waste management facilities, and broadband.
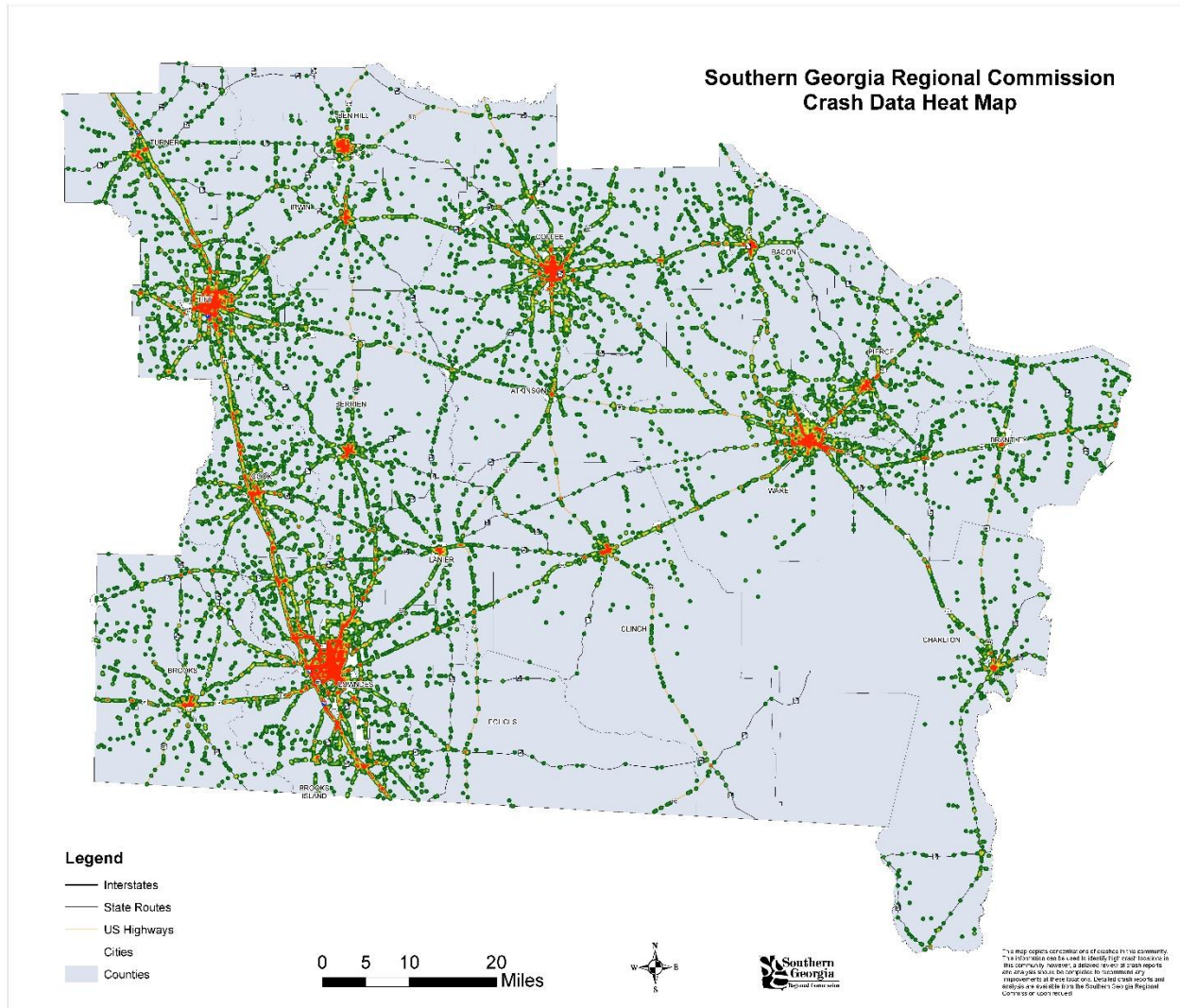
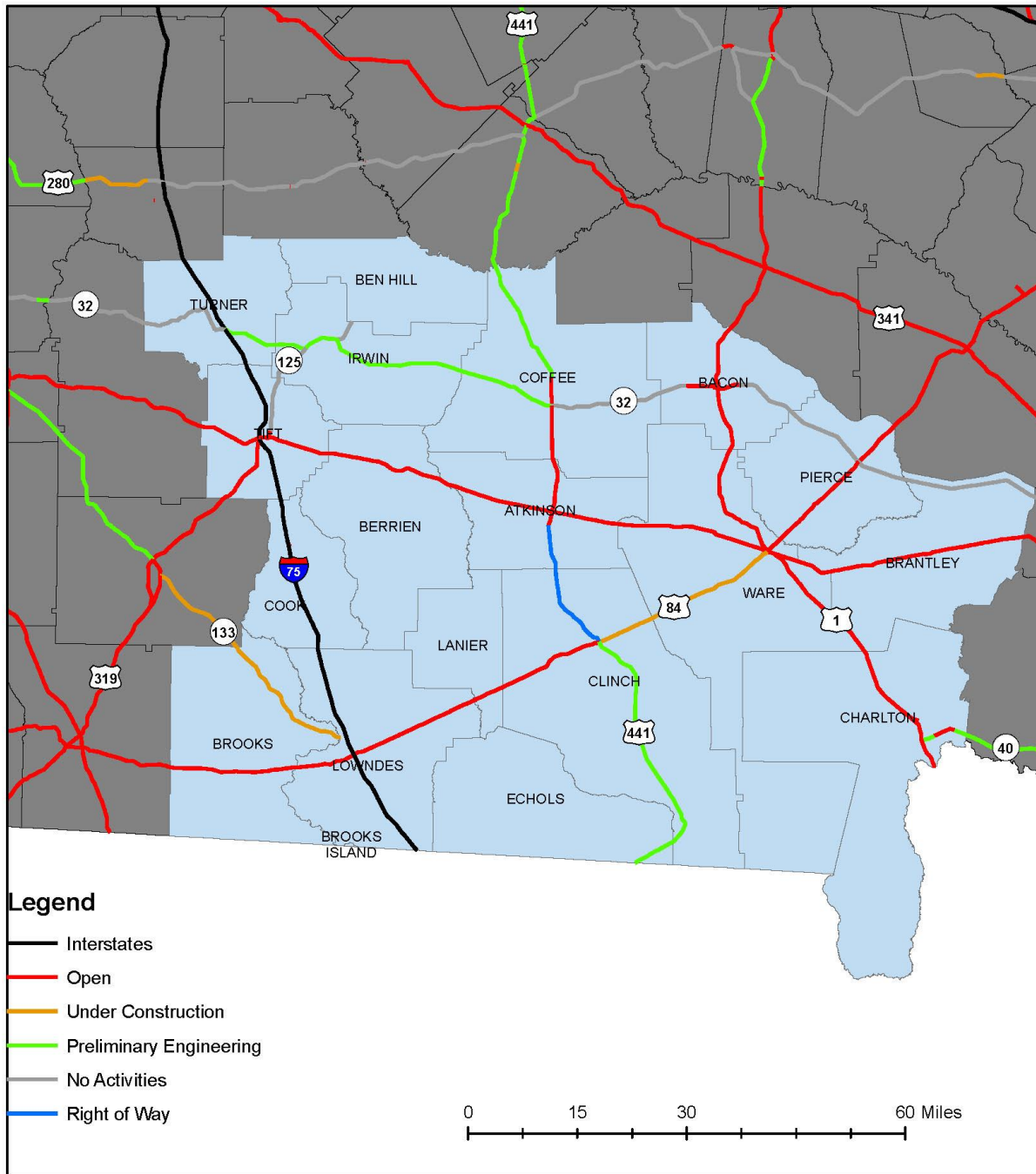# v) Transportation System

Road Network.

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Road Map by Classification

Legend
Functional Classification
— 1, INTERSTATE
— 3, OTHER PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL
— 4, MINOR ARTERIAL
— 5, MAJOR COLLECTOR
— 6, MINOR COLLECTOR

The above map shows the existing road transportation network in the region, organized by roadway classification: Interstate, Other Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, and Minor Collector. Because there is no regional transportation model, level of service data do not exist at this time.

No regionally significant issues with the road network are currently identified, apart from safety (see map on following page).

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Crash Data Heat Map

Legend
— Interstates
— State Routes
— US Highways
  Cities
  Counties

0 5 10 20 Miles

The above map shows motor vehicle crash data points for the region for 2011-2016. Individual crash points are shown in green, while areas of multiple crashes are shown in orange. As can be seen from the map, safety issues exist on nearly all of the region's roads.

Governor's Road Improvement Program (GRIP)
Current Staus
January 2017

Legend

— Interstates
— Open
— Under Construction
— Preliminary Engineering
— No Activities
— Right of Way

The above map shows the current status of roads in the region with regard to the Governor's Road Improvement Program (GRIP).

Alternative Modes.

Bicycle Network
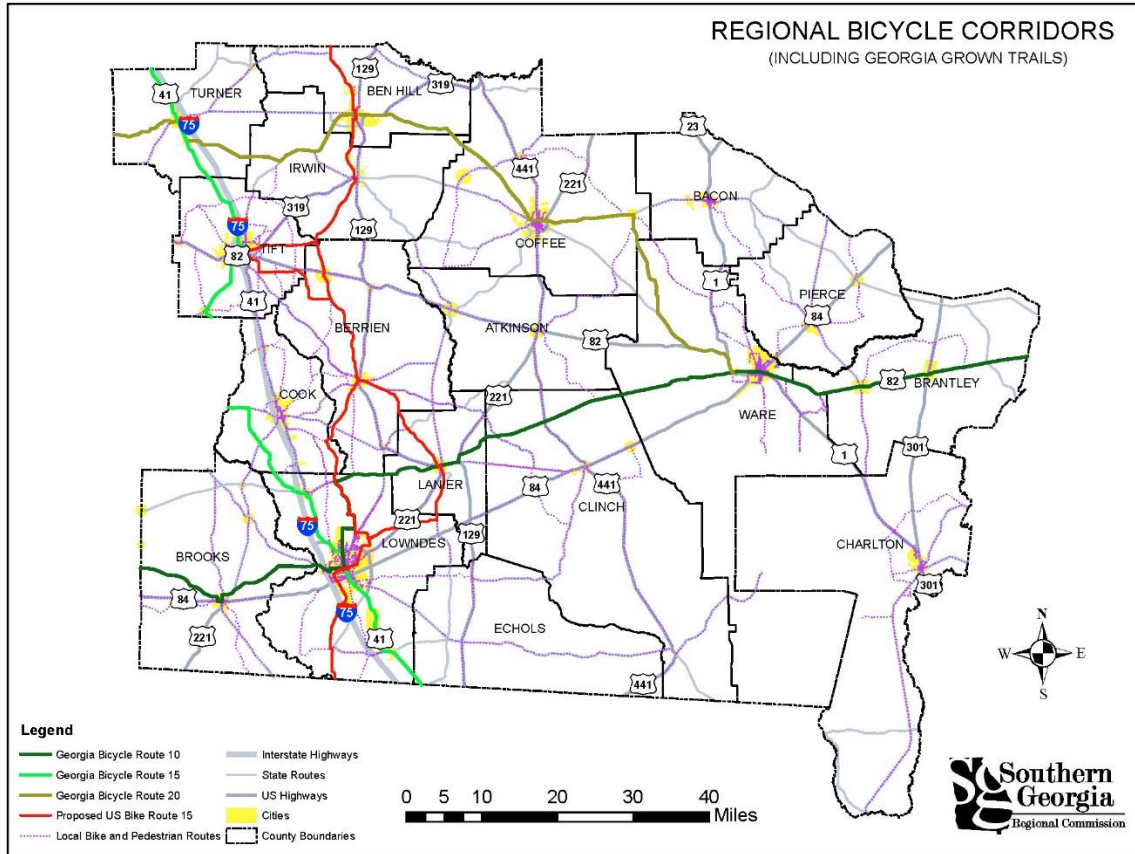
The above map shows bicycle corridors in the region. State Bicycle Routes 10, 15, and 20 pass through the region, as does the proposed U.S. Bike Route 15. In addition, several counties have locally designated bicycle routes.

Mode choice is generally limited throughout the entire region (except in a few select areas, depending on trip destination and origin), due to the overall lack of sidewalks, lack of bicycle infrastructure, and lack of public transit services.

Pedestrian Network
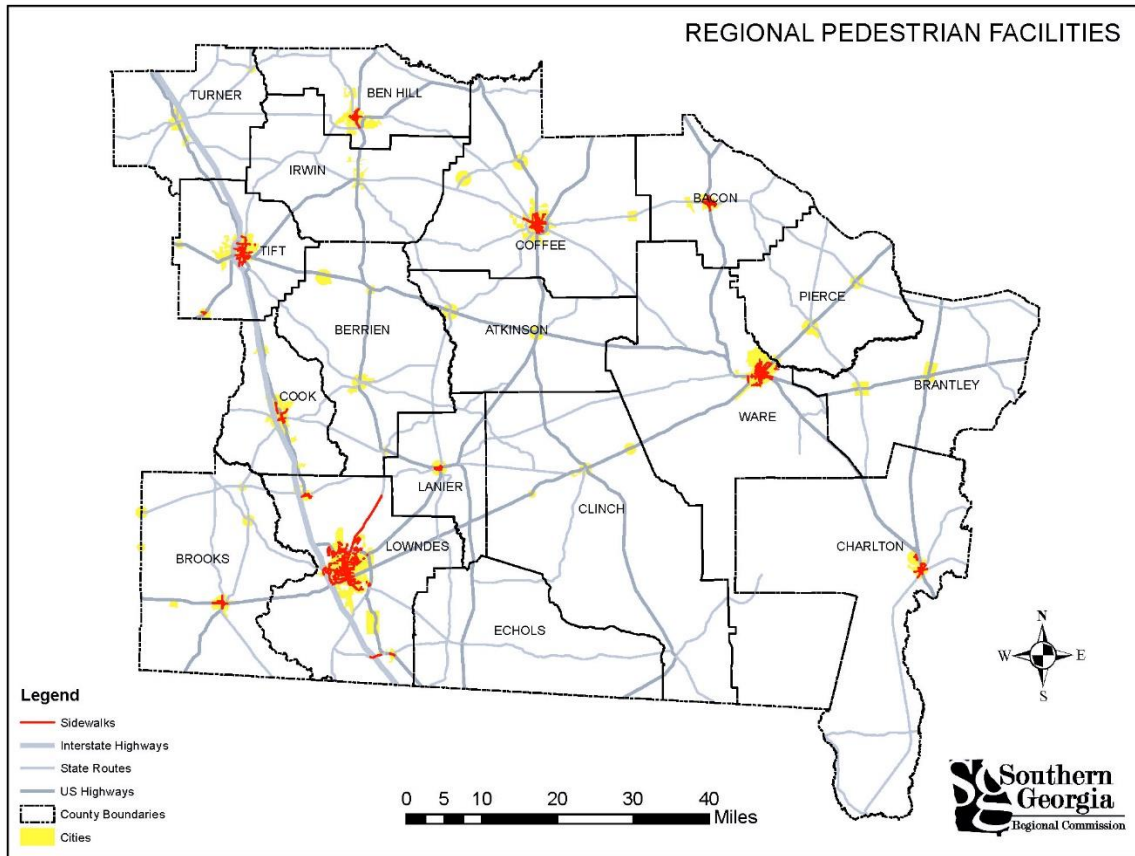
The above map shows the sidewalk networks in the region. Some of the region's larger cities (for example, Tifton, Valdosta, and Waycross) have extensive sidewalk networks. However, these networks are not comprehensive; gaps, safety issues, and lack of connectivity persist.

Public Transportation
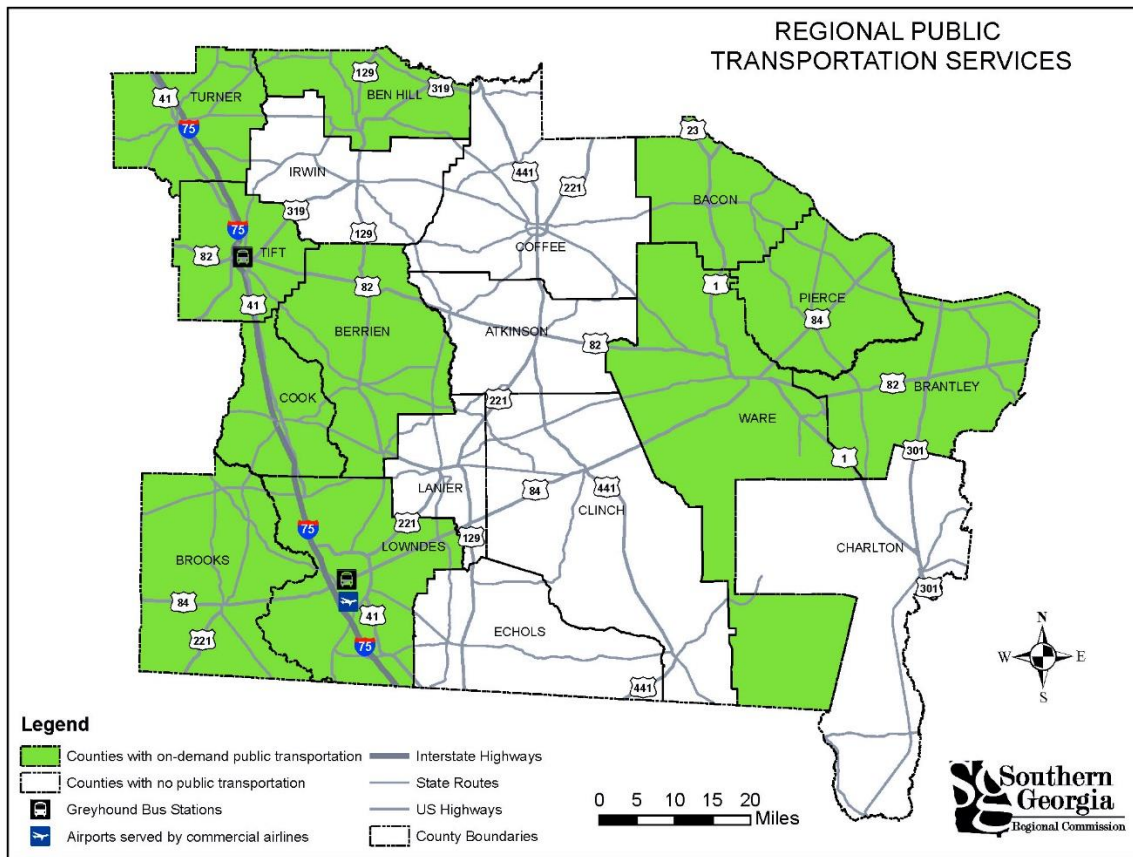
The above map shows the public transportation options available in the region. Eleven of the eighteen counties operate a local "on-demand" bus service that can be used by the general public; rides must be scheduled in advance.

The DHS Coordinated Transportation system serves the consumers of the DHS divisions throughout the region, including the Division of Aging Services (DAS), the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), as well as consumers of their partner agencies, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). The goal of the DHS Coordinated Transportation System is to enhance the lives of consumers in Georgia by strengthening families while supporting their self-sufficiency and helping to protect vulnerable children and adults.

In addition, limited transportation services are available in all counties of the region to eligible residents, including but not limited to Medicaid beneficiaries (through LogistiCare), and private taxicab companies also serve many of the communities in the region. Uber, a "transportation networking company," has available services across the region.

The only fixed-route public transportation service in the region is the Blazer Shuttle bus service operated by Valdosta State University, which serves the VSU area. A fixed-route shuttle bus service was operated

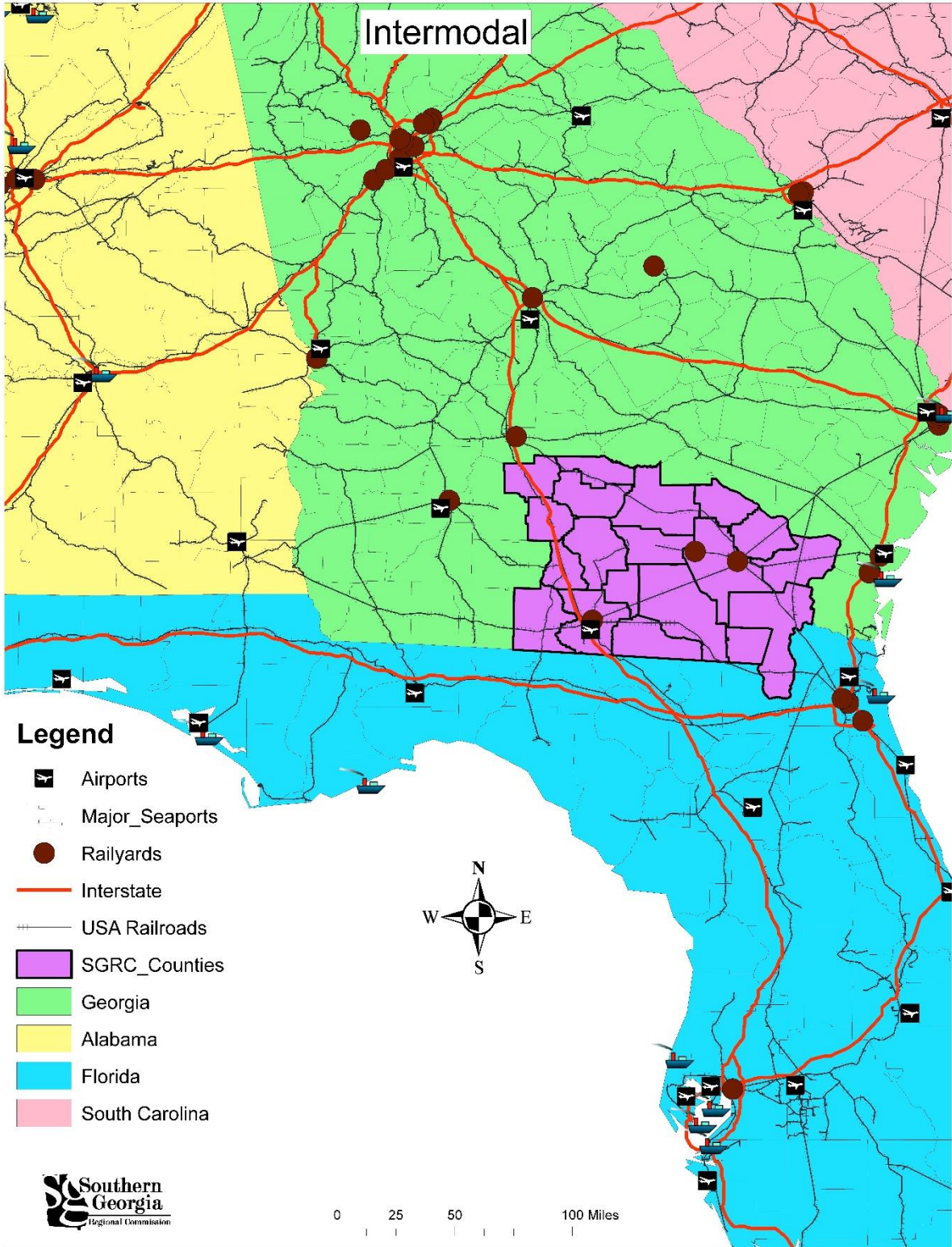as a pilot program in the City of Valdosta during 2016, but was subsequently cancelled due to lack of funding.

Intercity public bus service is provided by Greyhound lines from two stations in the region (Tifton and Valdosta). Passenger air service is available from Valdosta Regional Airport, the only airport in the region served by a commercial airline.
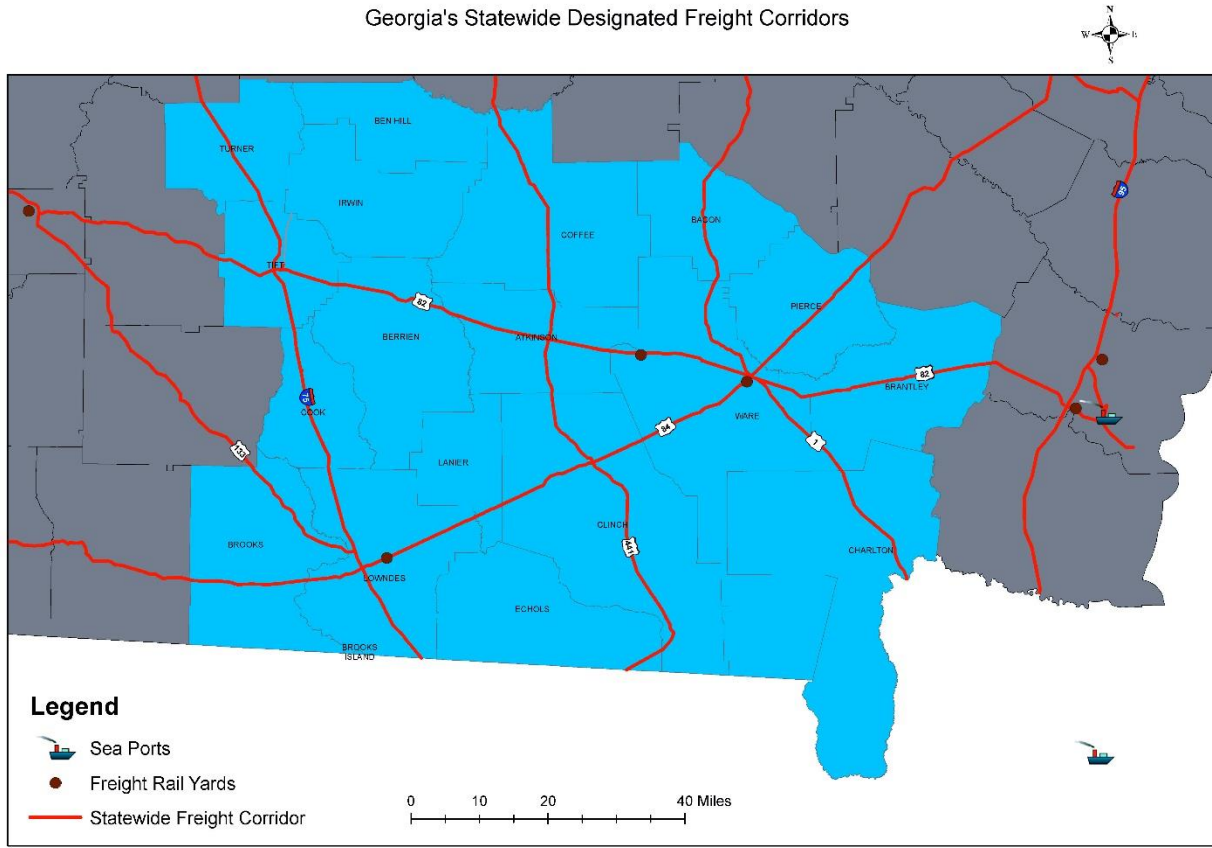
Railroads, Trucking, Port Facilities and Airports.
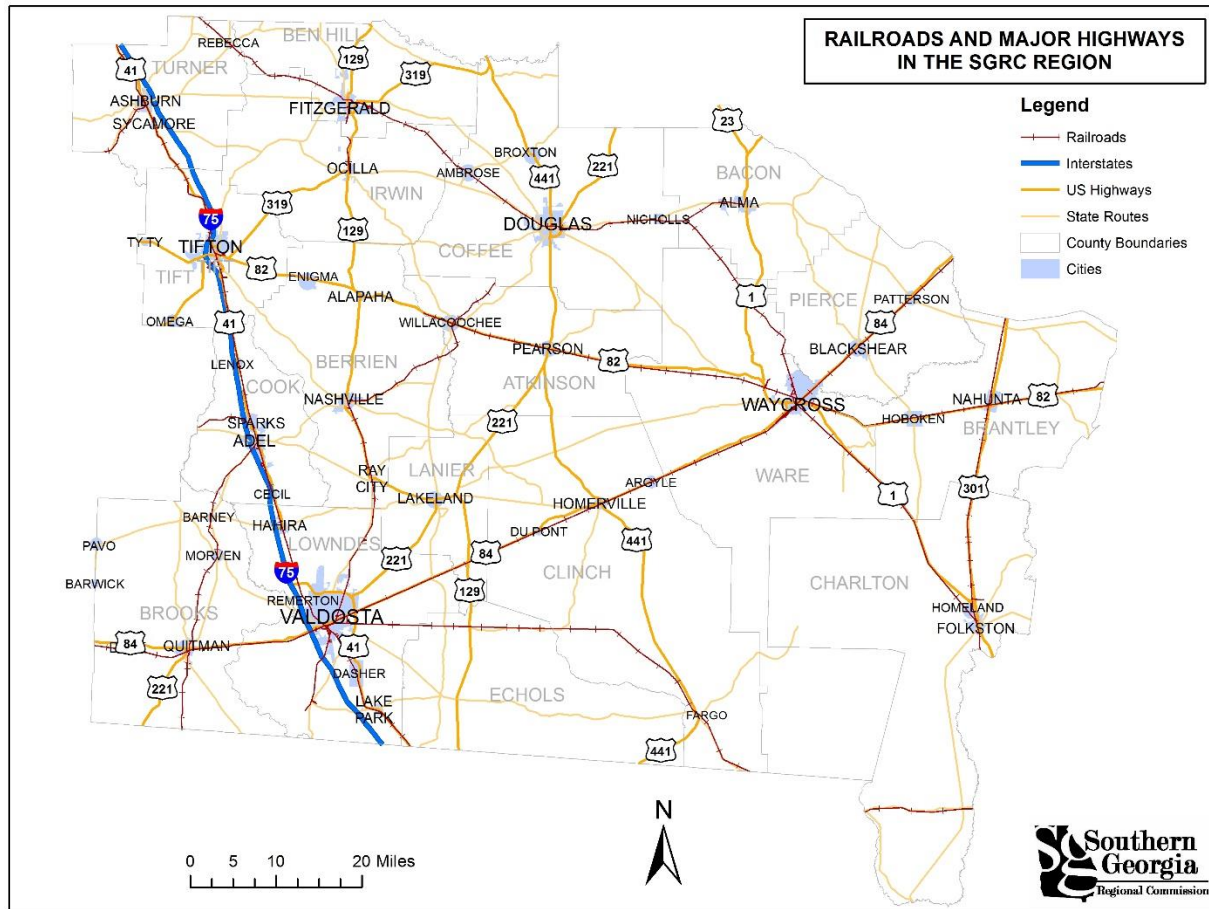
The above map shows freight railroads in the region. The region has a comprehensive freight rail network operated by CSX, Norfolk Southern, and other companies. Rice Yard, in Waycross, is a major "hump"-type classification yard.

There are no passenger rail stations in the region. However, Amtrak's Silver Star, Silver Meteor, and Auto Train lines pass through the region, along a railroad running parallel to U.S. Route 301 and passing through the Cities of Folkston and Nahunta.

Intermodal

Legend

- ▣ Airports
- Major_Seaports
- ● Railyards
- —— Interstate
- ┼┼ USA Railroads
- ▨ SGRC_Counties
- ▨ Georgia
- ▨ Alabama
- ▨ Florida
- ▨ South Carolina

Southern Georgia Regional Commission

0   25   50   100 Miles

N
W ◆ E
S

The above map shows the intermodal freight network in the region and beyond, including major airports, major seaports, and railyards.

The above map shows designated non-rail freight corridors in the region, as well as sea ports and freight rail yards.
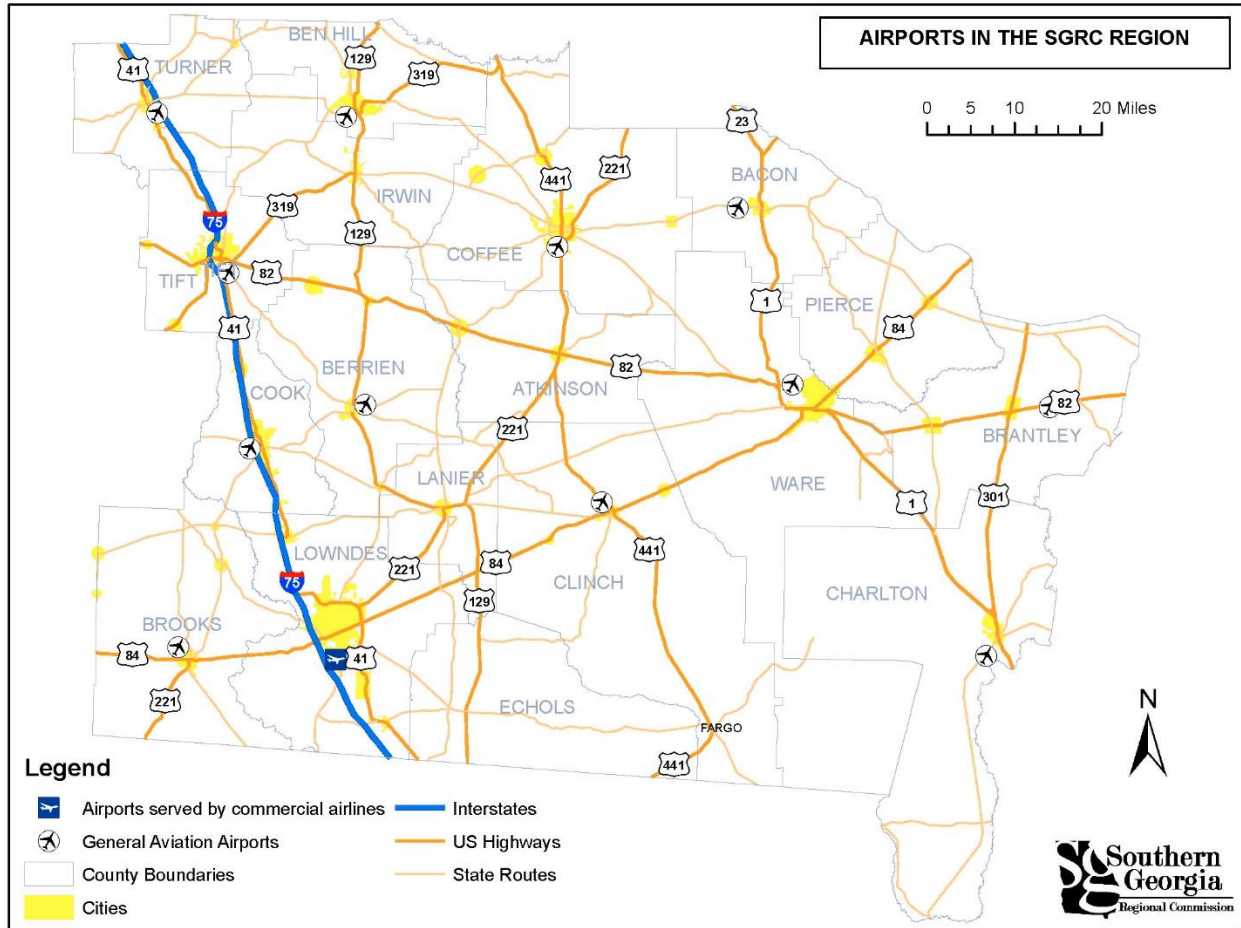
The above map shows commercial and general purpose airports in the region.

Transportation and Land Use Connection.

No areas of the region are currently identified as experiencing significant traffic congestion or having significantly underutilized transportation facilities.

APPENDICES

Appendix d) STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT REPORT

Update based on new stakeholders and process ☺

Introduction

The eighteen counties in this region include rural counties, urban areas, internationally renowned wildlife preserves, small villages, bigger cities, interstates, dirt roads, a nationally important military base, along with the diverse population living in and around these areas; all united by a down home love for South Georgia, and the desire to be the best it can be for its residents, businesses and visitors alike.

The Regional Plan has set out to capture this spirit and the diverse values through its stakeholder involvement program which consists of three elements:

1) The identification of the various stakeholders;
2) The identification of participation techniques; and
3) The schedule of completion for the Regional Agenda.

In order to be able to paint a true picture of this region for the Regional Agenda, a variety of outreach efforts have to be employed including face to face conversations, visits, workshops, e-mail campaigns, website updates, face book updates and newspaper updates for public meetings.

i) Identification of Stakeholders

Local Governments:

Atkinson County *City of Pearson City of Willacoochee*

Bacon County *City of Alma*

Ben Hill County *City of Fitzgerald*

Berrien County *City of Alapaha City of Enigma City of Nashville Ray City*

Brantley County *City of Hoboken City of Nahunta*

Brooks County *City of Barwick City of Morven City of Pavo City of Quitman*

Charlton County *City of Folkston City of Homeland*

Clinch County *City of Argyle City of Dupont City of Fargo City of Homerville*

Coffee County *City of Ambrose City of Broxton City of Douglas City of Nicholls*

Cook County *City of Adel City of Cecil City of Lenox City of Sparks*

Echols County

Irwin County *City of Ocilla*

Lanier County *City of Lakeland*

Lowndes County *City of Dasher City of Hahira City of Lake Park City of Remerton City of Valdosta*

Pierce County *City of Blackshear City of Patterson City of Offerman*

Tift County *City of Omega City of Tifton City of Ty Ty*

Turner County *City of Ashburn City of Rebecca City of Sycamore*
Ware County *City of Waycross*

Other Stakeholders:
Airport Authorities
Boards of Education
Chambers of Commerce
Citizens
Councils on Aging
Development Authorities
EMA/EMS
Fire Departments
Historic Preservation Boards
Hospitals/Medical Centers
Housing Authorities
Main Street Organizations
Moody Air Force Base
Police Departments
Southern Georgia Regional
Commission
State and Federal Agencies
Universities/Colleges
Valdosta/Lowndes MPO
Workforce Development Boards

ii) Identification of Participation Techniques

(1) Steering Committee

During the 2017/2018 5-year update to the Regional Plan, a Steering Committee was established from within the Southern Georgia Regional Commission members. This same Steering Committee will continue to serve during this Full Update of the Regional Plan.

(2) Required Techniques

We will employ the following participation techniques to involve the stakeholders in the development of the Regional Plan, create awareness of the plan, and gather a broad range of input into the plan. Some of the participation techniques are more intended to disseminate information, others to solicit input and participation.

(a) First Public Hearing

Required Public Hearings

A public hearing as required will be held at the beginning of the planning process on August 24, 2017, to present the Draft Regional Agenda to the stakeholders and present an additional region-wide opportunity for comment. Expand description upon completion.

(b) At least 3 public listening sessions

Work Sessions

Work   sessions with stakeholders will be utilized to provide input and feedback on the formulation of a regional vision statement, regional issues and opportunities, and the implementation program including the guiding principles, performance standards, activities and work program as proposed by staff. As

required the listening sessions will be held throughout the region, with a minimum of one session in Valdosta, one in Waycross and one in Douglas. Expand description upon completion.

Informational Techniques:

Surveys

A short survey will be developed to solicit input from Stakeholders on issues and opportunities and performance standards. The survey will be distributed by e-mail and available for download on the web page and Facebook page.

Regional Plan Update Webpage

This webpage will be part of the Regional Commission website where all the information regarding the Regional Plan Update will be displayed. The webpage will provide information on all meetings, PDF draft documents and will also include contact information for staff to provide more information, clarifications or details upon request.

Facebook Information Sharing Page

The Facebook page "Southern Georgia Regional Commission Information Center" will serve as an information clearing house to distribute information on meetings, progress, and provide opportunity for comments, especially for those stakeholders that are not able to attend meetings.

E-mail

E-mails will be utilized to notify and invite stakeholders to workshops, meetings and public hearings.

(c) Documentation of Conducting Participation Program
Sign in sheets
Copies of ads